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# The Nation.

March 3, 1984 $1.25; U.K. 65p

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EDITORIAL

## PUNISHING KATHY BOUDIN

Violence breeds violence, and the attempted robbery of $1.6 million from a Brink's truck in Nyack, New York, on October 20, 1981, in which two policemen and a guard were killed, has spawned more than its share of it—both inside and outside prison. One of the accused was severely beaten by prison guards for five days and suffered a broken neck. Anonymous bomb threats, initially blamed on sympathizers of the defendants, were directed at the Orange County government offices. Evidence has surfaced that the threats were made by a local police intelligence agent, who has since been suspended. A young guard posted on the roof of the jail in which defendant Kathy Boudin was being held (which was surrounded by heavily armed officers) killed himself while playing Russian roulette.

Last week, Boudin's lawyers persuasively argued that two and a half years of punitive harassment had culminated in her being "kidnapped" by Rockland County authorities in violation of an appellate court order that she be held in a facility in Westchester County, pending her trial in White Plains on a murder charge. The motive, assuming the prosecution was not deliberately creating an atmosphere of public danger prejudicial to the defendant, was Westchester's demand that Rockland pay it $7 million to keep Boudin under special security. Her lawyers point out that she must spend up to two and a half hours traveling between the court and the jail, and is thus effectively deprived of adequate opportunity to consult with them.

As Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz, who is not connected with the trial, has observed, "In the name of basic decency and constitutionality, Kathy Boudin should be treated in a manner consistent with the presumption of innocence and with the obligation to assure her a fair trial."

IN NICARAGUA
Andrew Kopkind

THE PRESS
Alexander Cockburn

THE REAL IMMIGRATION REFORM
Ed Griffin

FRENCH McCARTHYISM
Claude Julien

LETTERS OF E.M. FORSTER
Bernard McCabe

TRILLIN'S 'KILLINGS'
Ann Jones

STEELWORKER REVIVAL

## WAKING FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM

BRUCE SCHMIECHEN, LAWRENCE DARESSA AND LARRY ADELMAN

In the aging steelmaking towns of the Northeast, December is the cruelest month. Just two days after Christmas, U.S. Steel added to the record-breaking chill by announcing it would permanently lay off 15,400 workers and close part or all of twenty-nine mills, the largest shutdown in American history. The news came a year to the day after Bethlehem Steel lopped off 10,000 jobs and two years after U.S. Steel spent $6.2 billion not to modernize its aging plants but to buy Marathon Oil.

The winter of 1983-84 may also be remembered as a turning point, when steelworkers decided they must do more than accept pink slips with resignation. For the past three years we have been researching and making a film on America's industrial decline. During that time we witnessed a change in steelworkers' attitudes. Their traditional reliance on corporations first gave way to feelings of betrayal and despair. More recently, however, there have been signs of an awakening sense of independence, as workers have begun to explore a far-reaching alternative to the steel companies' desertion of their communities.

It is fitting that this emerging "revolution" had its start at the U.S. Steel works in Homestead, Pennsylvania, just outside Pittsburgh. Here in the Monongahela Valley, Andrew Carnegie began building the world's largest steel corporation in the late nineteenth century. Here too steelworkers battled Pinkerton agents in the historic Homestead strike of 1892. At its peak in 1958, the mile-long complex provided good jobs

(*Continued on Page 255*)

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# LETTERS.

## OBJECTIVE APPLAUSE

*Springfield, Ohio*

*The Nation*'s January 28 special issue on Central America is incredible. Peter Davis's article on Nicaragua ["Mirror of Our Mid-life Crisis"] has given me an insight that I could not possibly have got anywhere else. Living in an area where most of the newspapers take an "America can do no wrong" attitude, I find it very hard to get objective journalism dealing with issues such as Central America. Keep up the good work.

*Larry Ricketts*

## FOR LOVE OF CORPORATIONS

*San Jose, Calif.*

"How We Make Revolution Inevitable," by Walter LaFeber, the lead article in *The Nation*'s special issue on Central America, obscures the nature of U.S. aggression in Central America and the nature of the excuses for that aggression.

LaFeber acknowledges that the revolutions there are "engendered by hunger and centuries of exploitation," but he concludes by saying: "The Alliance for Progress and a half-century of military aid have sharpened and helped transform the inequality of Central America into the bloodshed of revolution. By ignoring that fact, the Reagan Administration is hastening the revolution it so blindly fears."

Revolutions in Central America are indeed engendered by hunger and centuries of exploitation. Specifically, it is exploitation at the hands of U.S. (as well as European and Central American) corporations. U.S. military aid has been given solely to protect that exploitation. The Alliance for Progress itself was designed primarily to assist U.S. corporations in exploiting Third World people. U.S. military policy must not be separated from U.S. corporate policy. By separating them, LaFeber presents the current situation as the result of mistakes made in Washington rather than as the inevitable outcome of U.S. imperialism. Capitulation to the corporations removes the most tangible element from the anti-intervention struggle and postpones still further the day that peace forces in the United States will be able to come together effectively to challenge the powers that have been destroying lives in Central America since long before U.S. troops were forced to withdraw from Vietnam.

In addition, what LaFeber calls "Reagan's deeply held belief" that the Soviet Union is the cause of instability in the Third World has little to do with the nature of U.S. foreign policy. The government has historically used anti-Soviet and anticommunist excuses for its actions because that is the most effective means it has of confusing and dividing the public. The nature of Reagan's anti-Soviet rhetoric is *the* issue that must be addressed by U.S. peace forces if we are to stop U.S. aggression before full-scale war erupts in Central America.

*J.R. Lindsay*
*Communist Party of Santa Clara County*

## LAFEBER REPLIES

*Ithaca, N.Y.*

J.R. Lindsay's fatal error lies in his letter's pivotal sentence: "U.S. military policy must not be separated from U.S. corporate policy." Leaving aside the question of whether there *is* a "U.S. corporate policy," it is a fact that many North American business leaders separated themselves from Reagan's military policies from the start. In Nicaragua, for example, the holders of $87 million in U.S. investment get along with the Sandinista regime, plan to remain in the country and fear that Reagan's attempt to replace the government with reactionaries will only lead to a long, destructive civil war. In Washington, Sol Linowitz, Cyrus Vance and George Ball—all of whom also qualify in the Communist Party's view as corporate spokesmen—have publicly and devastatingly discussed the failures of Reagan's military policy. Since the mid-nineteenth century, U.S. investors have ruthlessly exploited parts of Central America with the full cooperation of local elites and Washington officials. But by the 1930s many corporate leaders learned (as others would come to understand during the Panama Canal crisis of the mid-1970s) that gunboat diplomacy has been rendered useless, even counterproductive, by the growth of mass revolution. The membership of the Commission of U.S.-Latin American Relations exemplifies this understanding in the 1980s.

There is a further irony. Military leaders in the Pentagon have made it clear that they want their troops involved in a Central American war no more than they wanted them at the Beirut airport. Rather, it is the civilian cold warriors in the Pentagon, the White House and the U.S. delegation to the United Nations who share the delusion with Lindsay that the current military policy is a perfect fit for the national interest. It seems key members of the Reagan Administration and the Santa Clara County Communist Party work at about the same intellectual level.

*Walter LaFeber*

## AIM TAKES AIM

*Washington*

Peter Davis and *The Nation* owe the American Indian Movement an apology for Davis's gratuitous slap at AIM in his sometimes cynical article on Nicaragua in the otherwise excellent special issue on Central America.

Davis accuses an AIM leader of breezing into the Intercontinental Hotel in Managua, receiving a quick briefing "and emerg[ing] to declare that the Sandinistas are the best thing that ever happened to the Miskitos. . . . Then he breezed out again. He did not endear himself to the Miskitos and was regarded as unhelpful by the Sandinistas. Not many people, on the other hand, would go to the trouble of a 4,000-mile trip just to get better trajectory for a shot at the U.S. Interior Department."

Davis contrasts the AIM leader's behavior with that of another American Indian, who was part of a Vietnam veterans' delegation to Nicaragua and "who asked stern and probing questions of the Sandinistas and the Miskitos about their intentions toward each other. He won the respect of both."

As organizer of the delegation of Veterans Against Intervention in Central America, I know that the two Native Americans whom Davis mentions are one and the same: Tom LeBlanc, a Dakota Sioux and Vietnam veteran who works with the International Indian Treaty Council in San Francisco. LeBlanc and Tony Gonzalez of La Raza Unida Party stayed in Nicaragua for two weeks after the veterans' weeklong visit, traveling to the east coast to speak with Miskito Indians, an opportunity Davis snubbed, calling it a government "press junket."

That was not the first time AIM leaders have visited with the Miskitos, and it will not be the last. AIM and the International Indian Treaty Council have been consistently monitoring and facilitating the growing mutual respect between the Miskitos and the Sandinistas. Native American leaders in the United States are not about to sit back and allow the U.S. government, with its genocidal history, to manipulate and exploit ethnic contradictions in Central America. Their vision and dedication deserve the applause of all progressive people.

*Gerry Condon*

## DAVIS REPLIES

*New York City*

The way I feel about Nicaragua—an exciting, exasperating country full of both hope and desperation—is anything but cynical, not even "sometimes cynical," as Condon alleges. I do cast a rather wary eye on government statements, believing that a major interest of leaders everywhere is in retaining their power, not in helping reporters glean unpleasant truths.

Far from having "snubbed" a visit to the Atlantic coast, I tried repeatedly to go there but was turned down for any visit except a government-sponsored one. I felt I didn't have time for the press office's guided tour but needed to remain in the western provinces, where 90 percent of the people live.

I wonder why Condon feels there was only one American Indian visiting Nicaragua last fall. While I was in Managua, a Miskito Indian minister reported that he had recently seen an Iroquois, a Navajo and a Kiowa, in addition to the Dakota Sioux whom Condon mentions. This hardly adds up to "one and the same."

*Peter Davis*

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# EDITORIALS.

## Sandinista Fiesta

*Managua*

On the afternoon of February 21, 1934, Augusto César Sandino, "General of Free Men," leader of a legendary guerrilla army at war with the U.S. Marines in Nicaragua, flew to this city from his mountain camp to meet with President Juan Sacasa on a mission of negotiation and reconciliation. After a cordial dinner at the Presidential Palace, Sandino was kidnapped by National Guardsmen under the personal command of Gen. Anastasia Somoza, and at 10:29 P.M.—Nicaraguans know every detail of the day—was shot and killed. Sandino's father, who had been seized with his son, heard the gunfire. "It always happens," he said later. "Try to be a redeemer and you get crucified."

Managua this week is a vast, living memorial to Sandino, at once the saint of the Nicaraguan revolution and its hope for the future. The Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacionale (F.S.L.N.)—which is essentially a political metaphor for its martyred hero—has fashioned an extraordinary re-creation of Sandino's life and struggles on the fiftieth anniversary of his assassination. Hundreds of foreign dignitaries and sympathizers converged on the country for the celebration. There was a stirring "act of the masses" with banners flying and children cheering in the Plaza de la Revolución; a gala cultural evening in the old Grand Hotel,


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in ruins since the earthquake of 1972; a special session of the Council of State with addresses by foreign friends; a political poetry reading by the revolutionary poet-priest Ernesto Cardenal; appearances by the aged remnant of Sandino's 300,000-man army in their old guerrilla uniforms; glittering receptions, television saturation, barrio festivals and singing, dancing and responsive cheering everywhere. "After fifty years . . ." someone yells in a crowd. "Sandino Lives!" everyone answers in unison. The cues are delivered, but the response is remarkably real. At 10:29 P.M. Tuesday, fireworks burst in the sky and you could feel the presence of Sandino in the hot Managua night.

In the center of this ritual of collective history, the F.S.L.N. is projecting an urgent political strategy: the legitimization of a revolution increasingly under fire by the *contras* and under siege by the United States—Sandino's unremitting enemies. The anniversary provides a unique setting to mobilize people who recognize themselves as "the children of Sandino." And it creates an opportunity for the front to gather support from timid sympathizers in Latin America and Western Europe who stay silent in the face of revolutions in the present tense but are charmed by the remembrance of anti-Yankee campaigns past.

Commandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra's announcement, at the anniversary demonstration Tuesday morning in the Plaza, that the first postrevolutionary national elections would be held this November perfects the strategy. With a word he neutralized the Reagan Administration's biggest rhetorical gun against Nicaragua, and forced the local opposition—both loyal and disloyal—further into defensive positions. Many Nicaraguans remember Jeane Kirkpatrick's frenzied interchange with Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto on *Nightline* last April, which was heavily reported here. The U.N. ambassador declared that the Administration was backing the *contras* in order to force the government to hold elections. "Well, that's it," a Nicaraguan told me with a wide smile after Ortega's announcement. "The U.S. can stop now."

Of course it won't. No doubt the sophists in the State Department will find a way to rationalize their enthusiasm for the Salvadoran elections to be held later this month, their disdain for the Nicaraguan elections November 4 and everyone's unquestioned belief in the divine ordination of the American elections two days later. And the opposition here will have new charges loaded before long: the "climate" of Nicaragua is hostile to free elections, the new voting age (16) will pack the polls with Sandinista supporters, the vanguard position of the F.S.L.N. will remain unaffected by the results. No one—not even the U.S. Embassy's disinformation specialists—believes the F.S.L.N. and its allies will not win a resounding triumph. But elections, after all, are as much media as message, and they take place in the eyes of the audience more than in the reality of power.

In fact, the elections look to be the least interesting thing about Nicaragua in the middle and long distances. The revolution is embattled but obviously energetic, and the upheavals under way are not subject to change at the polls. The opposition represents interests and classes that may have joined the insurrection against Somoza but lost the revolution that took place after July 19, 1979. They still have a future in Nicaragua—Ortega reiterated the front's commitment to political pluralism and a mixed economy—but the future must be restricted by the conflicts in progress. Anyone can tell after a trip through the dusty barrios of the capital and out into the wild countryside that the children of this long, tortured revolution are with Sandino and that martyrs are hardly in short supply. Nicaragua, Father Cardenal said with as much truth as poetry, "is a tomb of martyrs."

ANDREW KOPKIND

# Foreigners' Aid

There is no evidence that international capitalists are conspiring to buy the 1984 Presidential election for Ronald Reagan, but they are certainly behaving as if that were their goal. During the last few years foreign investors have been pumping money into the economy at a record rate—some $60 billion last year, $80 billion predicted for 1984 and even more in 1985. Although that money goes into stocks, bonds, bank accounts and the like rather than into Reagan's campaign fund, it is buying his re-election just as surely as if it had—and perhaps more surely. The influx of foreign capital has kept interest rates down, funded the military buildup, prevented a tax increase, lowered the inflation rate and even boosted stock prices. If it continues to pour in until November 6, it could purchase four more years of Reaganism.

Most economists predicted that huge Federal deficits and attendant U.S. Treasury borrowing would drive up interest rates and choke off the recovery. Instead, the economy is growing. This is because foreign capitalists have been covering Treasury borrowing. Without that money, competition over the available pool of capital among the government, business and consumers would have pushed interest rates sky-high. Higher rates would have prevented housing starts from rising in January to a projected annual rate of 1.9 million units, the highest since the construction boom of 1978, and would have driven auto sales down.

Rapid economic growth usually ignites inflation but here, too, foreign capitalists have made Reagan look good. Before they can invest in the United States, foreigners must buy dollars. The demand for the dollar has shoved up its price and consequently pushed down the value of other currencies. Since cheaper foreign currencies mean lower prices for imported goods, American businessmen who compete with foreign manufacturers are compelled to hold their prices down.

Will foreign capitalists keep Reagan's balloon inflated until the election? They are a fickle bunch, and if inflation picks up or interest rates fall or the rest of the world seems a little less scary, they might take their money and run. Then the dollar would decline, interest rates and inflation would rise further, the economy would sputter and stall and Reagan's house of cards would collapse. A Democrat could capture the White House.

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For the Republicans to remain on top, they have to keep foreign capitalists happy until the election. To do that they must be tough on inflation, which means pressing to keep wages down and tightening the money supply. Either strategy could cost votes, however; the first by alienating labor and the second by increasing interest rates. The obvious course for Reagan would be to make the rest of the world unsafe for capital. Not by tripping a confrontation with the Soviet Union; that could backfire and would be bad politics. Anyone know a nice little island in the Caribbean that the Marines could invade this fall?

# A 1984 Olympics

Although the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo closed without a violent incident, Los Angeles is girding for a wave of terrorism at the summer Games. The Los Angeles Police Department, unchastened by a recent out-of-court settlement in which it paid $1.8 million to 144 plaintiffs and the American Civil Liberties Union, which brought a class-action suit on their behalf, charging that the antiterrorist division had spied on them. Recently the department went on a shopping spree for state-of-the-art surveillance gadgetry. With $798,500 from the city's Olympic Trust Fund, it has purchased the following items:

§ A $1,500 "viewing scope" which enables the viewer to observe the inside of a dimly lit room and to videotape or photograph the occupants.

§ Six "night-vision" telescopic sights, costing $4,395 each. They attach to a weapon and enhance available light so that a target can be located in almost total darkness.

§ Nine "stabilized viewing devices," at $1,697 each, which clamp to binoculars or cameras, doubling their range.

§ Ten "infrared retractable filters" to be used in helicopter surveillances at night. They supplement the Vietnam War surplus searchlights that adorn L.A.P.D. copters.

The department has also purchased a number of submachine guns with silencers and a British-made electronic impression detector which enables an investigator to read what was written on the top sheet of a pad from the traces left on the next sheet.

When *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* reporter Lennie LaGuire raised the specter of hi-tech invasion of privacy resulting from the use of these gadgets, in an interview with Police Commander William Booth, he said, "It's foolish to suggest that the police are just waiting with baited breath for high technology to give them tools with which they can thwart the Constitution."

The L.A.P.D.'s record of spying on law-abiding citizens suggests otherwise and prompts serious questions about the use to which the new equipment will be put. It is doubtful that hi-tech will be effective in fighting terrorism. In the past five years, there have been six incidents of terrorist violence in Los Angeles. Most were committed by Armenian groups which had been under constant police surveillance.

To strengthen the antiterrorism net, the California Legislature recently passed a law giving the L.A. Olympic Organizing Committee access to confidential arrest records. The committee expects more than 100,000 job applicants, many young and nonwhite, a sample of the population with a higher than average rate of arrest. In addition, the committee will channel the information to concessionaires like McDonald's and Coca-Cola, who will use them to evaluate current employees.

Not to be outdone, the City Council has introduced some 1984-style measures of its own: among them, a pass system for the residents of the Coliseum neighborhood and an ordinance banning all demonstrations during the Games. (The bills are presently being discussed in committee.)

At the conclusion of the Olympics the 10,000 athletes and 700,000 spectators will depart—and with them the "threat" of terrorism that the Games posed, but the Police Department will still have its hi-tech surveillance devices. The Olympics may pose a greater danger to the civil liberties of Los Angeles residents than terrorism ever could to the Games.

## FOLLOW-UP: THE BUCK BUCKS

Last May, *The Nation* published an article on the Beryl Buck trust fund ["The Curse of the Buck Bucks," May 14] based on a report by Peg Brickley and Fred Powledge for The Nation Institute. Buck's legacy, $10 million in stocks in a small California oil company, had shot up in value in 1979 as a result of President Carter's decontrol of oil prices and the purchase of the company by Shell. Now it is worth $360 million and produces an income of $27 million annually. Under the terms of the will, all the income is distributed to charitable, religious and educational groups in Marin County. The trust fund is administered by the San Francisco Foundation.

In 1980, the foundation came under attack by a coalition of charitable groups in the Bay area, who pointed out that Marin County has the sixth-highest per capita income in the country. *The Nation*'s article disclosed that many people in the county were troubled about the political power the foundation had acquired because of its largesse.

On January 30, the foundation dropped a bombshell: it filed a petition to alter Buck's will so that some of the income could go to needy groups outside the county. Marin officials cried foul. "I think they're grave-robbing bastards," Supervisor Gary T. Giacomini told the *Independent Journal*. The stage is set for a legal battle royal. The foundation argues that had Buck known the trust fund would increase in value to the degree it has, she would not have wanted all the income to go to Marin County. Attorneys for the Buck family cry that the will is sacrosanct. But the Buck legacy has become something of a philanthropic boondoggle. Better that the grip of the past be loosened and the money flow to people who need it.

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# BEAT THE DEVIL.

## He Did It for the Nerds

Familiar patterns of emigration can be observed at the Chicago *Sun-Times*, as a thin slice of that paper's staff has preferred to quit rather than work under the Murdock regime. Why, oh why did the Field brothers sell out? many of them ask angrily. *Revenge of the Nerds* is part of the answer. This is the film Ted Field and David Obst are producing on the West Coast. *Nerds* is designed to be an *Animal House* for preteens, and Ted wants to spare no expense. A bigger buck, a better *Nerd*. The *Sun-Times* was a small price to pay.

Meanwhile, *Vanity Fair* has asked Garry Wills to write an article about the sale. *Vanity Fair* is edited by Tina Brown, spouse of Harold Evans, who faced off against Murdoch at *The Times* of London. Some might say the assignment has the *appearance* of being designed to give Murdoch the shaft, though no doubt Brown would be just as delighted if Wills, a first-rate writer, was to conclude that Murdoch is the twentieth century's answer to Thomas Jefferson.

Inside every fat man there's a thin one struggling to get out, and in the case of Henry Kissinger it was Harold Evans, who shaped the monster's memoirs. Now Evans ponders whether to edit a new Chicago evening paper. The possible backer would be John Malone, a packager with whom Evans went to graduate school in Chicago.

It seems that the *Sun-Times* lost 30,000 readers when Murdoch took over. Murdoch, who acquired the Field syndication network along with the *Sun-Times*, tried to shift Ann Landers from *The Boston Globe* to his own *Herald*, but she refused and for good measure asked him to double her salary.

## Merchant of Dreck

Aside from the simple pleasures of having the battleship New Jersey pepper the hills and villages of Lebanon with 16-inch shells, the U.S. Navy has a couple of serious preoccupations.

The top sea dogs fret privately that the antics of Navy Secretary John Lehman may in the long term discommode the Navy's annual budget offensive—an onslaught far more deadly than anything yet achieved by the whiskered New Jersey. Lehman, they acknowledge, has had short-term success in squeezing billions out of Congress for three carrier battle groups and the refurbishing of the New Jersey, Iowa and Missouri and for other appanages of the chimerical 600-ship Navy every mariner craves.

But Lehman is widely regarded as a bully and a boor, of an unpleasantness exceeded only by that of his friend and former business partner Assistant Secretary of Defense (and Great Satan of the arms race) Richard Perle. So the Navy brass fears Lehman is making too many enemies for their service, and a couple of budget fights down the road the day of reckoning will dawn.

Lehman aside, the admirals have another pressing task: how best to sell Congress and the taxpayer on the need for the proposed new attack submarine, projected to come in at a price of $1 billion plus. In pursuit of the necessary appropriation, the Navy's salesmen are laying a preliminary barrage with the help of one of their most highly regarded public affairs operatives, John McWethy, Pentagon correspondent for ABC News.

McWethy fans have long marveled at his shameless zeal in flacking for the services in their ceaseless quest for money. No threat too specious, no claim too ludicrous but that McWethy will ventilate it on the airwaves. He recently distinguished himself by claiming that the New Jersey had pranged the Syrian commander and his staff in their bunker east of Beirut. Reporters visiting the spot could find no trace of dismembered Syrians or kindred detritus from a 16-incher (whose projectiles, the Navy likes to claim, are equivalent in weight to a Volkswagen).

Many McWethy observers reckon that his February 8 performance on ABC was at the summit of his art, as he went to battle for the new attack submarine. McWethy began by soothing the audience with the news that the United States is ably guarded by the miracles of high technology embodied in the current Los Angeles-class attack submarines, and in the "array of listening devices that stretch across the entire northern Atlantic, [with which] the U.S. routinely tracks movement of Soviet submarines as they come and go from home port."

Then, in the usual tradition of the threat inflater, McWethy ushered a serpent into this aqueous Garden of Eden: "Intelligence sources [a vintage McWethyism] say, however, that new Soviet submarines run faster, dive deeper and, worse, they outnumber American submarines three to one." Furthermore, with devilish cunning the Soviet ballistic submarines have taken to lurking—immune to scrutiny from surface ships or aircraft—beneath the Arctic ice, ever ready to rip through and blast the bejasus out of the United States.

And then the finale: "That leaves [America] one primary weapon to go after these Soviet missile boats—the hunter-killer submarine. That's why Congress is being asked this year to start funding research for an entirely new class of attack submarine, one that will be bigger, even quieter and will cost more than a billion dollars a copy." Having beaten the taxpayer into submission, McWethy gives a parting kick: "It's also why Congress, after much debate, will probably give the Navy exactly what it wants."

So much for McWethy. What are the facts?

On the matter of these dread supersubs. It's true that the Russians have some new nuclear submarines that run fast and dive deep. They are also so noisy that when in the Norwegian Sea their vibrations can be picked up in Bermuda. But Soviet submarines outnumber those in the United States because the Russians persist in building old-

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

fashioned horse-and-wagon-age diesel electric submarines, which are noted for their cheapness but not their speed or depth.

Next, America's famous array of listening devices. Soviet trawlers routinely rip up sections of these sonar nets from the ocean bottom, an act of sabotage they would obviously practice on a larger scale in the event of hostilities. Soviet submarines returning to port are in the habit of circling the devices as a friendly way of telling the eavesdroppers they have returned home safely.

Finally, there's not much point in building another costly class of attack submarines to go chasing about under the ice, for the simple reason that despite all the talk of electronic fingerprinting, it's virtually impossible for one submarine to locate another with any certainty underwater. This fact was ably presented by John Tierney in the November issue of *Science '83*, a report discomfiting to the technofantasists who like to proclaim that the oceans have become transparent.

## Neocons vs. U.N.

Around the United Nations they are still gasping at Richard Bernstein's January 22 article in *The New York Times Magazine*, "The U.N. vs. the U.S." One delegate actually dragged a well-thumbed clip from his pocket and read to me in tones of amazement:

> The Americans seem bright and engaging outsiders. Mrs. Kirkpatrick herself is usually a brilliant speaker and debater, a masterful explainer of American policy—perhaps the most dazzling intellect at the world body. Her speeches are events at the United Nations, filling seats that are commonly empty during routine debate.

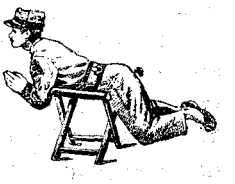
Not many people at the United Nations seem to share Bernstein's high estimate of Mrs. K., but I don't suppose he will ever have a problem gaining admittance to the U.S. Mission.

Actually Bernstein's piece was a classic of neoconservatism, accurately symbolizing what *The Times* and particularly the *Magazine* have become. The article gave a ludicrous picture of U.N. activities, rather in the manner of an ice hockey commentator outlining Proust. You could get a good notion of the direction Bernstein was headed in from the first three authorities he quoted—Jeane Kirkpatrick, Midge Decter and the Heritage Foundation. Decter was chastely identified as "the director of the Committee for the Free World" and the foundation as being merely "Washington-based." You may be sure that if Bernstein had been quoting Cora Weiss or the Institute for Policy Studies, epithets like "left-leaning," "radical," "pro-Third World" and other warning signals would have cluttered the page. Decter and Heritage, now in the mainstream, are spared all political description.

## Mideast Affairs

Bernard Gwertzman's February 19 story in *The New York Times Magazine* about the Reagan Administration's secret dialogue with the P.L.O. was interesting for more reasons than one. Gwertzman reported that nine months of talks beginning in August 1981 had been held between Yasir Arafat and John Mroz of the Institute for East-West Security Studies, who was given the go-ahead by then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

Delicious insight into the insanity of the Reaganite view of the world is provided by the Administration's proposal in early 1982 that the P.L.O. "agree privately" (in Gwertzman's words) "to help in reducing terrorism in Central America."



Gwertzman says the discussions reached "a potentially crucial point" in May 1982, when the P.L.O. said it would respond by mid-June to an American proposal for mutual recognition. Any possible answer was preempted by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon on June 6. In fact Mroz met with Arafat right at the end of May—and the P.L.O. subsequently thought, with some cause, that it had been merely strung along while Haig was giving the green light for the Israeli invasion.

As interesting as the story is, why should it have been leaked to Gwertzman now? Details of the meetings had been seeping out for about a year. Of course this story of secret dealings with the United States won't particularly help Arafat in his factional wars. And right on the heels of calls by Mubarak and King Hussein for U.S. dialogue with the P.L.O., revelations of previous secret Reagan Administration contacts might be seen as a signal to the Administration not to embark on any further funny business.

*The New York Times*, incidentally, does not seem to have thought it worth asking Arafat for his version of the events in question.

Footnote: Only yesterday I came across *The New Republic* of July 5, 1982. Blazoned on the cover are the words, "and dawn for Lebanon." Inside, the editorialist has written, "The restoration of a Lebanon in which Christians might pursue their livelihoods, their faith, and their separate cultural ways free of terror would be an enormous triumph for the West and for the flickering dream of democracy. That this is again possible is directly attributable to the Israeli victory over the P.L.O." Ah well, I guess the West screwed up again.

Reaganisms still trickle in. Last year a group from the National Association of Arab Americans was visiting the Oval Office, in which were assembled Ron and the rest of the A Team. Ed Meese said brusquely that there could be no question of a Palestinian homeland. What, in that case, said the visitors, should be done about the 4 million Palestinans? "Four million," Reagan burst out in surprise. "You mean to say there are *four million*?"

## Pause for a Smile

Afrikaans Cavalry talk for "Mount your horse!" is "Grabbel op aan die beeste!" This is right, so far as I could check it in Kritzinger's indispensable *Handige Woordebook*.

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# DISPATCHES.

## ■ AUSTRALIA: The Nugan Hand Investigation

Nugan Hand, an American-owned merchant bank based in Sydney that collapsed four years ago, has the Central Intelligence Agency worried. In 1982 *The Wall Street Journal* published a series of articles linking the bank to multimillion-dollar swindles, drug trafficking and arms smuggling. Worse, it discovered that a number of former U.S. intelligence and military officers were employed at Nugan Hand when it went under. Last year, an article in *Foreign Policy* provided evidence that Nugan Hand was the "bursar" for C.I.A. operations aimed at Australian political parties and labor unions. The C.I.A., which rarely comments on such allegations, flatly denied any connection with Nugan Hand but refused to cooperate in Australia's investigation of the bank.

Recently, the Australians released "Volume 4: Nugan Hand (Part II)," a report by the Commonwealth–New South Wales Joint Task Force on Drug Trafficking. It is a shocker. Among dozens of remarkable vignettes on the intelligence community is one describing how former C.I.A. agent Edwin Wilson, who was convicted last year of running guns to Libya, performed a similar service for Nugan Hand.

According to the report, Wilson was hired in 1973 by the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence "to expand the operations of Task Force 157" by establishing a number of proprietary companies to be used as fronts for intelligence work. One of the companies Wilson founded was World Marine, which had offices at 1425 K Street, in Washington. Incidentally, although the C.I.A. claims Wilson severed all ties with it in April 1976, the report points out that he worked out of World Marine offices until late 1979. It goes on to say:

> According to "J" [a former employee of Wilson's], in either 1975 or early 1976 two C.I.A. operatives, James Hawes and Robert Moore, who were then working out of Indonesia, called at World Marine in Washington D.C. Hawes told Wilson that there would be some Australians visiting Washington to discuss an African arms deal "that had to be put together." There was also some discussion about Agency operations in Indonesia and the name Nugan Hand was mentioned in a general way.

Shortly after Hawes's visit, Wilson and Maurice Houghton, an official of Nugan Hand, had a series of meetings, at the end of which Wilson placed Nugan Hand's order for 10 million rounds of ammunition and 3,000 weapons, including machine guns, M1s and carbines. World Marine shipped the weapons from Boston ostensibly to a buyer in Portugal. En route, however, the shipment was diverted to South Africa. The report concludes that the weapons were received by Michael Hand, one of the founders of Nugan Hand, and shipped to C.I.A.-supported guerrillas in Angola.

Hand is still sought by the Australians on criminal charges in connection with the bank's financial dealings. Soon after the collapse, he left Australia using a false passport provided by a mysterious friend named "Charlie." The Australians have identified "Charlie" as James Oswald Spencer, a former member of the U.S. Special Forces who was "loaned" to the C.I.A. during the Vietnam War. Spencer was interviewed by the F.B.I., but refused to talk about his dealings with Michael Hand.

## ■ LEBANON: The Army Game

When Shiite Moslem fighters moved to retake West Beirut last month, many of their coreligionists in the Lebanese Army preferred to switch rather than fight. Their behavior must have disappointed Fadi Afram, the military commander of the Phalangist militia. Last November, Afram spoke frankly to the Kuwaiti publication *Al-Siyasah* about the political role he expected the army to play:

> Lebanon . . . is not an Arab country. . . . No state or military power is ready to die in the place of the Lebanese. Therefore, the Lebanese Army must undertake this task. This can occur only after the army has obtained sufficient support. It cannot be done in a month or two but will take two years. If the army can again liberate the mountain [the Shuf region, home of the Druse] then the military balance will change decisively. Then the political negotiations will be turned about in Lebanon's favor.

Thus all along Afram and the Phalangists have viewed the Lebanese Army as merely an instrument to promote Phalangist interests. That has always been the problem in Lebanon. In 1969, the commander of the army, Gen. Jaim Nujam, paid a visit to Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser. According to Nasser's intelligence chief, Amin Houeidi, Nasser told the Lebanese general,

> You know, Jaim, my opinion about the Lebanese. They boast of their democracy and they have no democracy. They speak of their great economy and they produce nothing. Their state is a piece of paper. But still, you have in your hands the solution to all these problems. Lebanon needs a national army, not an army of the Maronites.

Houeidi told "Dispatches" that when his Lebanese friend (the two had been classmates in a military training program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) returned to Beirut, he tried to open the officer corps to non-Maronites. "But a few months after his talk with Nasser," Houeidi said, "Nujam died in a plane crash. I don't know if it was by design or by accident."

## ■ CANADA: A Trader Traduced

The author of a letter in the London-based *International Currency Review* was identified only as "a senior Canadian foreign exchange trader who, for obvious reasons, wishes to remain anonymous." The nameless trader wrote to Christopher Story, editor of the *Review*, to complain that his financial institution, also unnamed, had inexplicably withdrawn its credit line to the safe, sound Netherlands in order to extend $4.5 million (Canadian) to the shaky Central Bank of Brazil. At that time Brazil owed $4.5 billion in interest to foreign banks, and the conscientious trader complained, "I am mad as hell that this is where my hard-earned money is going. . . . What is the point of working, really?"

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

He thought he knew the reason for the risky loan: 25 percent of his bank was owned by a major foreign bank that was heavily exposed in Brazil. That fact, he said, "might explain this sudden burst of generosity."

In the next issue of the *Review*, the trader reported that details published in his letter had enabled his employer to penetrate his veil of anonymity. "I was under the impression you were more discreet," he wrote Story, signing his name, S.T. Agnew. "Within half an hour of receiving that issue, the Bank of Canada's local representative was on the phone asking me personally: 'Why did I write a letter to the ICR?' To keep this story short, I was fired quickly."

The hapless Agnew had embarrassed his employer, Mercantile Bank of Canada, which is partly owned by Citibank. And why was Citibank so insistent that Mercantile make the loan to Brazil at a time when small banks are retrenching on loans to the Third World? The answer is that the International Monetary Fund's refinancing packages include pledges by major commercial banks that they will continue lending to large debtor nations. Under the agreement Brazil signed with the I.M.F. in December, private banks promised $6.5 billion in additional loans. That's a lot of money, even for big multinationals like Chase Manhattan, Citibank and Manufacturers Hanover. So it's not surprising that pressure is exerted on small banks like Mercantile to kick in. The bulk of the new loans is used for interest payments on Brazil's $90 billion foreign debt. The principal will probably never be repaid. Yet a board member of Mercantile blandly told S.T. Agnew, "There are no problems with Brazil. It [the trouble] is grossly overstated."

## ■ PAKISTAN: Baluchi Mercenaries

Last November some 12,000 Baluchi tribesmen converged on the town of Turbat, Pakistan, in response to a state radio announcement that a British major was recruiting soldiers. The men were asked to take off their shirts to be examined. If they were found fit for service, their chests were marked with a rubber stamp; if they were rejected, a large X was inked on their backs. When the major had filled his quota of 500, the remaining tribesmen were dismissed.

But they did not leave. Instead, they stoned recruiters, and hundreds of police armed with tear gas were called in to quell the ensuing riot.

Each year the Sultanate of Oman sends representatives on tours of Baluchistan to sign up tribesmen to serve as soldiers in its British-trained army. About 3,000 of the Sultan's 20,000 troops are Indians or Pakistanis. Many of the officers are British.

Since jobs are scarce in Baluchistan, men have traditionally responded to the recruitment. But in recent years the banned Baluchi Student Organization has protested when Oman's recruiters arrived. This year's riot was preceded by a student demonstration in which thirty-two protesters were arrested. Afterward, the students issued a statement which said: "The recruitment procedure is disgusting. We are being treated like sheep and goats. [Baluchis] are being recruited as mercenaries to kill antistate agitators and suppress liberation movements in Oman."

In 1979 a Baluchi student attempted to assassinate the Omani colonel leading the recruitment drive. He missed and killed another man instead. The student was subsequently convicted and hanged for the shooting.

## ■ BRITAIN: Annual Secrets Clearance

Every year during the last week of December the British perform a rite of particular interest to historians and journalists. The archivists in the Public Records Office, Britain's National Archives, release bits of information that had been official secrets for thirty years. The majority of these secrets are mundane or ridiculous. But there are always a few nuggets of historical gold.

Last year's batch was more rewarding than most; 1953, after all, was a watershed year. Stalin died. Iran's Mohammed Mossadegh was overthrown by the Central Intelligence Agency. Queen Elizabeth was crowned. And thanks to the Public Records Office, we know that during 1953 the British Admiralty discussed at great length whether sailors should be allowed to sport earrings. After considerable debate, the Fourth Sea Lord recommended that each case be decided on its merits.

In a more serious vein, Sir John Sinclair, head of the MI6 intelligence service, planned to mount clandestine operations behind Soviet lines in the event of World War III. The Cabinet, with good British common sense, nixed the scheme as too costly and instructed Sinclair—or "C" as he was known—to confine himself to "certain *coup-de-main* special operations in the Middle East" to be executed immediately on the outbreak of war.

Cabinet documents show that Churchill rejected France's request for help in its war against the Vietminh. The Americans agreed to step up their subsidies of the French war effort, and John Foster Dulles told the British Cabinet that "the Indochina problem could be resolved or at least reduced to manageable proportions within eighteen months or two years."

More pertinent to the present is a report on Argentina's attempt to purchase the Falkland Islands. Rear Adm. Alberto Teisaire, Argentina's envoy to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, made an offer that the British quickly turned down. The Foreign Office, however, seemed more offended by the admiral's attire than by his checkbook diplomacy. One memorandum complains that the admiral arrived not only without a uniform but without any decorations on his suit. "The result was that at the major functions he looked unhappily like a rather inferior waiter."

Is there anything still secret about 1953? Inevitably. If more than 90 percent of the records are released, the archivists are authorized to withhold particularly sensitive items. Thus documents on Princess Margaret's relationship to Group Capt. Peter Townsend have reportedly been locked up until 2004, or perhaps even 2054.

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# ARTICLES.

THE REAL IMMIGRATION REFORM

## Help Mexican Workers at Home

ED GRIFFIN

Congress's on-again, off-again love affair with immigration reform is on again. The Simpson-Mazzoli bill, which Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill tossed in the trash can last fall because he feared President Reagan would veto it to win points with Hispanic voters, is likely to be passed during the current session.

Critics of the bill have called it racist and antilabor, among other things. So it is—and also irrelevant. What happens in the halls of Congress has little effect on the movement of people across the Rio Grande. That is the result of millions of decisions made in Mexican towns and *ejidos* ("rural villages").

The people most directly affected by the measure—the Mexicans who seek work in this country on a temporary or seasonal basis—were excluded from the legislative debate, which was dominated by representatives from business, agriculture, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and the Hispanic community. At the heart of the bill is a trade-off between organized labor and Hispanics: amnesty for undocumented workers who have been in this country longer than five years and sanctions against employers who hire undocumented workers. But that deal is of no benefit to the migrant workers. Few of them will qualify for amnesty, and the sanctions will make employers reluctant to hire them, forcing them into the underground and underpaid sector of the economy.

But that's the way the Washington game is played. Interest groups and voters count; alien farm workers, domestic servants and unskilled factory hands do not. The mystery is how anyone could expect Congress to solve the immigration puzzle when it ignores the biggest piece in it: the 5 million undocumented workers. How can we expect Congress to legislate in the interest of people whom it does not represent?

While the legislators have been wasting tax dollars on lengthy hearings and debates, independent unions organizing undocumented workers have been creatively dealing with the economic causes of illegal immigration. They have discovered a solution to the problem of illegal immigration that relies not on stricter controls but on improved living conditions in Mexico and working conditions in the United States. The product of their organizing is an international worker-run economic development program that is changing the lives of thousands of seasonal migrant laborers.

An independent union, the Arizona Farm Workers (A.F.W.), is a pioneer in this effort. Instead of treating undocumented workers as scabs and wetbacks—labor's traditional approach—it has organized them as equals. Many Americans do not realize that U.S. labor laws apply to undocumented workers. Migrants are guaranteed the right to join unions and to receive the minimum wage, and they are entitled to the same health and safety protections that cover American workers.

It all began six years ago with the work of the Maricopa County Organizing Project among undocumented citrus workers in the orchards near Phoenix. In 1979, the citrus workers won a collective bargaining agreement that made them among the highest-paid agricultural laborers in the world. Prior to that, they averaged $8 a day. Now, with improved piece rates, they can earn as much as $10 an hour. They also have a benefit package that includes company housing, vacations, seniority rights and health insurance.

Theirs was a protracted struggle. It included a series of strikes and prompted raids by the Border Patrol. Hundreds of deported strikers trekked for days across the desert to return to the picket lines. In preparation for the strikes organizers crisscrossed the border, visiting workers in their native villages in the states of Querétaro, Guanajuato and Sinaloa. In meetings the workers raised concerns that went beyond the issues that had prompted the strikes. "As wages and benefits improve, won't more gringos come in to take our jobs away?" they asked. (An ironic twist on the common bumper-sticker xenophobia.) "What happens if the farmers sell out to developers and there is no more work for us in Arizona?"

Such anxieties about their future led to an additional demand in the contract talks: an economic development fund financed by the employers. Under the collective bargaining agreement, the employers contribute 10 cents for every hour an employee works (it has since been raised to 20 cents). The fund, which is known as the Farm Workers Economic Development Corporation (F.E.D.C.), is controlled by the workers. They elect a board which allocates money to projects in Mexico designed to create jobs and develop local resources. The money is also used to set up training programs in such areas as animal husbandry, midwifery and co-op management.

Since 1980 the economic development program has spread to dozens of communities in eight states in Mexico, as more and more people realize that exploitation north of the Rio Grande is inextricably tied to poverty at home. Striking migrants in Arizona, Texas and Arkansas are demanding contracts that establish funds like the one created by the A.F.W.

On a recent trip to the Ahuacatlán region of the state of Querétaro, I saw the changes the funds have wrought in communities that export migrant labor to the United States. Along the road through the Sierra Gorda between the

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towns of Jalpan and Pinal de Amolés, there are more than sixty such communities. Every October for years the young people there went to Arizona to work in the orchards. In the late spring most returned home to plant a tiny plot to help their families subsist, but the lack of meaningful employment forced them back up north when the fall came.

In the past two years, however, that picture has been changing. The region is humming with activity, and all talk is of "the water." Agronomists hired by the workers advised them that the area was ideally suited for peach growing, but a more reliable water supply was needed. With F.E.D.C. funds, members of the Arizona Farm Workers and their families have constructed more than a hundred small reservoirs to catch springwater. Hundreds of miles of hose snake through the mountains, forming an intricate system that pumps water to young peach trees.

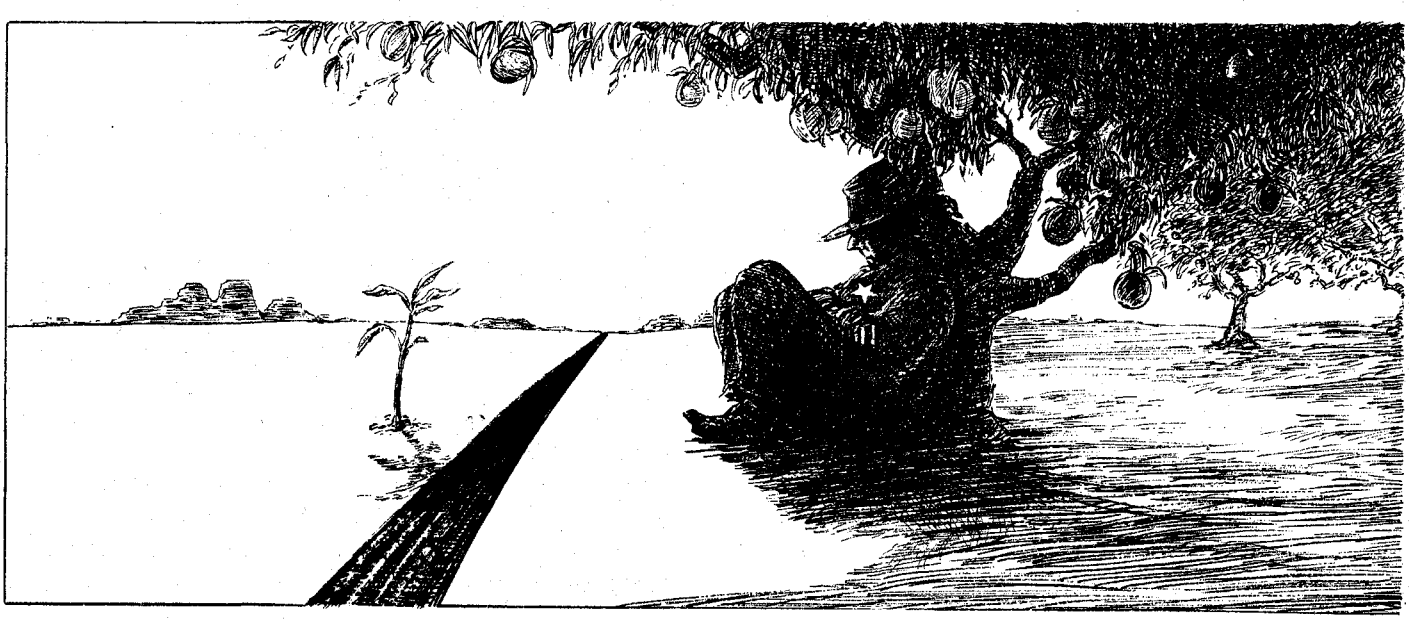
In addition to the water projects, the people have started pig farms and a sewing cooperative, built a secondary school and instituted training programs. All this activity has affected their attitude toward the journey to *el otro lado* ("the other side"). Families no longer completely dependent on wages earned from migratory labor regard such work as a steppingstone to making a livelihood in Mexico. A few years ago, a rare individual might have "hit it rich" in the States and managed to save several thousand dollars which could maintain his family for several years. Now organized workers earn money which is then invested for the benefit of the community. Migratory labor need no longer be a lifetime career or a net drain on the community. Although the most productive villagers are away for months, the time and labor they put in up north brings a return south. And the seniority rights they have won give them job stability, which insures a steady flow of funds back home. That makes long-term economic planning possible.

Similar changes are taking place in other regions of Mexico I visited. In the *ejido* of La Caja, near Irapuato in the state of Guanajuato, the people were sinking a well—the second of eight that are planned—using a $45,000 drilling rig purchased with economic development funds. In the village of Sinaloa they were building a tortilla factory and forming cooperatives to process cheese, milk and meat. Workers in the states of Nayarit, Sonora, Michoacán, Chihuahua and San Luis Potosí were studying the feasibility of various small business ventures. All such projects financed by the F.E.D.C. are organized in Mexico as a national cooperative called the Cooperativa Sin Fronteras.

There has also been a rebound effect in the United States. Union organizers appeal to the migrants by citing the success of the F.E.D.C. In the past, many of the workers would say, "My problem isn't here, it's back in Mexico." Groups like the Sin Fronteras Organizing Project in Presidio, Texas, and the Arkansas Farm Workers Civil Rights Organizing Project have discovered that workers are even more interested in dealing with economic problems in Mexico than in improving their horrendous working conditions in the United States. With the F.E.D.C., they can deal with them.

It should be no surprise that independent labor unions have so effectively taken up the cause of the Mexican migrant workers. The Europeans who came to this country a century ago placed their trust not in the government but in self-help groups and organized labor. Policy-makers, elected officials and union leaders who encourage crackdowns on illegal immigrants should study that history. Too many unions and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership assume that undocumented workers automatically threaten American workers' jobs and undercut their wages. But this is true only when they are intimidated from organizing. Stepped-up border policing cannot stop the flow. Instead, it maintains a pool of cheap nonunion labor which does indeed lower the general wage levels. In areas where migrant workers have been organized, however, they have raised not only their own wages but those of others.

Furthermore, programs that improve living conditions in Mexico reduce the number of people who must work up north to survive. Strengthening the Border Patrol and punishing employers who hire illegal aliens will never stop impoverished people from wading the river or climbing the wire fences.



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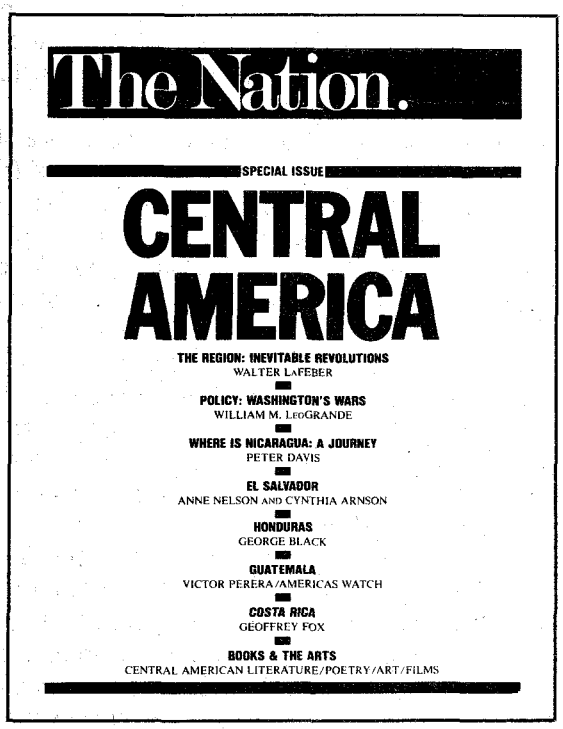
# CENTRAL AMERICA IN BULK

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This is not to say that immigration reform is unnecessary. Those aspects dealing with naturalization (a family affair) and with refugees (a political affair) cry out for urgent action. But on the problem of the undocumented Mexican workers Congress should adopt a laissez-faire approach, intervening only to protect their right to organize. Rather than wasting time on immigration laws like Simpson-Mazzoli, Congress should enact legislation to prohibit strikebreaking by the Border Patrol and raids on workplaces where organizing is in progress. It is time to let the workers solve their own problems, both here and in Mexico. Washington can be of most assistance by getting out of the way. □

HALFWAY TO THE GULAG?

# McCarthyism A la Française

CLAUDE JULIEN

The French right has a dream: to expel the Communists from the government. It is waging a fierce campaign to undermine the governing coalition of Socialists and Communists, and the rhetoric it uses may remind some Americans of the excesses of McCarthyism.

During the 1970s, the anti-Communist beast slept. The right believed it had discovered the secret of permanent prosperity. History was on its side. International communism was faltering. Events casting an unfavorable light on the Soviet system made propaganda unnecessary: the bloody repression of the Hungarian uprising, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in the West, the invasion of Afghanistan, the snuffing out of the flame of Solidarity in Poland. Those blows decimated the ranks of the French Communist Party. Conservatives confidently believed the future belonged to the West, not the East.

The global recession late in the decade shattered the illusion of unending economic growth. The fabric of French industry was revealed as moth-eaten; its goods were no longer competitive in the world market. Despite generous subsidies from the government, capitalist prosperity faded. The right's mediocre balance sheet belied its claim of having a monopoly on managerial talent.

But during those years of false hope a new Socialist Party was born and came of age. Its first steps were awkward, but

*Claude Julien is the editor of* Le Monde Diplomatique, *a political monthly published in Paris. This article was adapted and condensed from a two-part article that first appeared in that publication under the title "Democracy, Communism and International Tension: The New Hunt for Old Witches." Part I was translated from the French by Steven R. Ekovich and Part II by Amy Wilentz. Julien is the author of* The Suicide of the Democracies *(River Run Press),* America's Empire *(Pantheon) and* Canada: Europe's Last Chance *(St. Martin's).*

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it offered fresh ideas and, what is more, extended its left hand to the Communist Party, the scarlet woman of French politics. The latter was given a respectable role in government, though denied posts in the key ministries.

As its power slipped away, the right dusted off the cookbook of fear and trotted out the proven recipes. Its vision of the Red menace had not changed appreciably since the liberation. In 1947, under the anxious eyes of Washington, Socialist President Paul Ramadier purged his Cabinet of Communists. What is called "fascism of the left" today was labeled "Red fascism" in 1946 by *L'Epoque*, a leading right-wing journal of the time. In a long article titled "How the Communist Seizure of Government Is Legally Organized," *L'Epoque* warned of the pernicious effect of even a single Communist in government. Similar warnings were periodically sounded during the ensuing years. In 1962, Michel Debré, then Prime Minister and now a deputy in the Gaullist party, declared, "When one is elected with Communist votes, one is inescapably their prisoner."

Now as then the target is actually the Socialists; the Communists' self-inflicted wounds have already weakened them, as has the vibrant growth of the Socialists. The right's strategy is to paint the leftist alliance with the broad brush of Communist subversion, splitting it asunder.

The marriage of the Socialists and the Communists already shows signs of strain. There have been heated spats over foreign policy, economic austerity measures and electoral fraud in Communist-controlled municipalities. The right hopes to turn those quarrels into irreconcilable differences. Once the Communists are driven into embittered opposition, the right will generously offer its services to the voters to restore domestic tranquillity—first through control of the legislature, then of the presidency. If the leftist alliance can be destroyed, it is doubtful that it will form again for another thirty or forty years.

With that libretto to guide them, the tenors and basso profundos of the right have raised their voices in impassioned arias. On September 25, 1982, Michel Poniatowski, a conservative author, declared before the National Council of the French Republican Party that Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy's government "is antidemocratic because it contains Communist ministers—what a disgrace!" A year later he stated, "The threat of fascism in France does not come from the right; it comes from the left because of the very nature of its system and its methods." In his latest book, *L'Histoire Est Libre*, he is even blunter: "Power has been handed to the Communist Party, the party of totalitarian subversion, which has infiltrated the entire state."

Poniatowski's definition of totalitarianism is one-sided. In 1977 he traveled to Argentina with a "message of friendship" for the repressive government of Lieut. Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla. "The first conditions for human rights are liberty and progress," he said. "Terrorism must be eliminated, and France sides with all governments that struggle against it."

Another voice in the anti-Communist opera is that of François Leotard, general secretary of the Republican Party. "Having allowed Communists to enter the government, Mitterrand has shown that this republic is no longer a French republic," he said, charging that the Socialists were turning France into another Poland.

Agreeing that France is beginning to resemble a Communist bloc state, Charles Pasqua, a close collaborator of Gaullist party head Jacques Chirac, explained why: "The Communists are like sugar. Dissolved in a cup of coffee it sweetens the entire contents. Put Communists in a coalition, and the entire government becomes Marxist." Chirac himself has said, "It is by far more dangerous to support a coalition that contains Communists than to support a coalition at the municipal or local level that contains members of the [neofascist] National Front—they are really insignificant."

Even neoconservatives think the Socialists are taking France on a road that leads straight to the gulag. "Between the fraudulent socialism and the erosion of freedom that characterize France and the totalitarian socialism of the Soviet Union there is the family resemblance of the young serpent and his full-grown parent," proclaimed

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the neoconservative journal *Contrepoint*. Its publisher, newspaper magnate Robert Hersant, compares himself to "a dissident in a certain Eastern nation." *Le Figaro* describes the death of liberty under Socialism:

> One by one, the Socialist-Marxists have taken away our freedoms: The freedom to come and go as we please, lost ever since the transportation system was nationalized. The freedom to know, the freedom of research, the freedom of thought—all gone since academic freedom was abolished. Freedom of enterprise, killed by the heavy constraints of a government that waits to scrounge. The freedom to be treated by the doctor of one's choice, to be defended by lawyers worthy of the title. Freedom of the press—replaced by a tame media.

Jacques Soustelle, of the Académie Française, decries the "stranglehold of Marxist conformity which has been suffocating us since the end of World War II."

Conformity becomes conspiracy. Journalist Suzanne Labin reported a shocking example, in *Contrepoint*:

> Just before the presidential election, Mitterrand visited a tiny country at the other end of the world, a country with which France has had practically no relations—Communist North Korea. There he played buddy-buddy with one of the world's Stalinist dictators, Kim Il Sung. The only explanation for this bizarre encounter is that Mitterrand went there to meet with Soviet emissaries of the highest levels in order to engage in secret negotiations. It takes on darker overtones when one recalls that Mitterrand was elected by the Communists—and the French Communist Party obeys Moscow slavishly.

In his novel *Le Montage*, Vladimir Volkoff, a member of the Académie Française, describes the President of France, a character clearly based on Mitterrand, as a Soviet "mole."

The day after the provincial elections of 1982, Michel Debré fired off a warning shot in *Le Figaro*: "The Socialist-Communist government used to have legitimacy. Today it is barely legal and could quickly become illegitimate." Then, the day after the municipal elections last spring, in which the Socialists suffered a setback, he crowed that his prophecy had come true. A novel theory: municipal elections supersede presidential and legislative elections!

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Debré of course understands the Constitution of the Fifth Republic too well to believe that for an instant.

The enemy has also erupted on the television screen, once the property of the right, notably on the state-run Television France 1. According to Guy Baret in *France-Soir*, channel president and general director Herve Bourges exploits on a grand scale "a misunderstood lode of dazzling professionals: journalists who are both Christians of the left and Third Worldists." But, he added sanctimoniously, "Far be it from us to question the professional conscience and competence of our colleagues." Apparently a journalist who is both conscientious and competent has no right to express himself if he is "on the left" or, worse, a "Christian of the left and a Third Worldist." More directly, the Union Force Ouvriére, the nation's third-largest labor union, said, "The management of Channel 1 is quite simply acceding to the orders of international communism."

Rational political debate can never generate the frenzy that animates crusades. The necessary emotional charge can be furnished only by demagogy, insult, invective, fear and accusation without proof. To impugn one's adversaries, it is not enough to attack their ideas; one must also attack *them*. In an editorial on the U.S. invasion of Grenada, *Figaro-Magazine*'s general director, Louis Pauwels, warned, "For a long time Soviet-Cuban activity has benefited from propaganda and pious silence in France." Of the French government's disapproval of the American intervention he wrote, "Official France has entered a pompous dotage. She has no teeth left. From her mouth drips the saliva of Munich, a humanistic and juridical juice."

Pauwels compared the left's tolerance of communist subversion in the Caribbean to its softness on crime in the subways. The métro has been turned over to pickpockets, just as the Caribbean had been preyed on by "thugs," as President Reagan called Grenada's military rulers after the invasion. And who are the friends of the Caribbean punks? They include, according to Pauwels, the newspaper *La Croix*, which had the audacity to write, "In international law, [the invasion] is called aggression." To Pauwels, *La Croix* "expresses both the climate in the métro and our debased vision of the world—they are the same thing."

Another pundit who has linked criminal aggression from within to Soviet aggression from without is Max Clos, editorial writer for *Le Figaro*. Clos took off on a dizzying rhetorical flight last November, following the arrest of a dangerous criminal. According to Clos, in the left's view this "crazed killer" was "a victim of society, a fragile being whose tragedy was that no one understood him." Such a reaction was "a symptom of a sick society. Sick because it has lost all sense of value . . . because it no longer has the elementary reflexes that insure survival. This society refuses to believe that pacifism is a trap set by potential aggressors." The pacifists of the European disarmament movement tolerate the Soviet Union's SS-20 missiles just as liberal thinkers tolerate criminals. And who is responsible for "this anesthesia of the body politic"? The Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior who both "encourage" crime. The entire government encourages it. Could

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it be otherwise with four Communist ministers?

"We live in a time when the external menace continues to grow," Pauwels wrote. "Increasingly, however, Frenchmen find they must defend themselves against other Frenchmen if they want to remain men. The barbarians waiting outside the walls are pleased. The assault will be an easy one." In other words, there is a fifth column within the city gates.

In his recent book *La Force du Vertige*, André Glucksmann connects "the two most important innovations of World War II," Auschwitz and Hiroshima. He argues that in order to prevent a second Auschwitz—the gulag—from extending over the earth, the West must have nuclear superiority. The mortal danger of the second Auschwitz, he says, necessitates the accumulation of arms, never mind how they will be used or what political purpose they will serve. "Understand," says Glucksmann, "that I would prefer to risk death with a child I love in an exchange of Pershings and SS-20s rather than see him condemned to a planetary Siberia." And he continues, "There are situations in which the declaration of World War III would be heard as a deliverance, where those who have so little to lose would pray that the atomic bombs would fall."

Such logic must make strategists at the Kremlin and the Pentagon laugh out loud, for they know quite well that the issue cannot be posed in those terms. The choice is not between a global gulag and a global incineration; only the language of unreason and fear can articulate it in that way. Neither Washington nor Moscow envisions the alternatives in such apocalyptic terms.

The real issue, the only issue, is this: What use does the West intend to make of its nuclear weapons in its relations with the Soviet Union? To what ends? For what kind of peace? Or does the West plan to destroy the Communist world? If so, at what price? To protect what vision of Western society? Anticommunism and anti-Sovietism cannot justify the politics of overarmament, especially when the present stockpile is sufficient to wipe the Soviet Union off the map several times over. And if the purpose of this stockpile is primarily deterrence, what political order is it protecting?

Neither President Reagan nor any of the heads of state of the NATO countries have tried to answer that question. All they can do is accumulate missiles in ever greater numbers and intensify their anticommunist and anti-Soviet rhetoric, aided by intellectual troubadours of the right. Whoever seeks alternatives to the present policies is considered a traitor, an agent of Moscow or a pacifist manipulated by the Kremlin.

Thus does the West evade the debate that is the hallmark of democracy. Better to cling to a single idea, as did Yvon Gattaz, president of the national union representing managers in a speech last September: "We will not be dissuaded from expressing our fundamental anti-Marxism." Or to brand the entire left as totalitarian, as did activist actor Yves Montand in the *Nouvel Observateur*: "The left has a heavy burden to carry—the burden of all those crimes committed in its name, beginning with the gulag." Montand said that in 1977; since then he has sought a larger audience, crooning the same tune in *Figaro-Magazine* last April. In an article in the November *Figaro*, noted conservative Henri Amouroux joined the chorus. The left, he says, has undertaken "a nationalization of souls . . . socialism-communism congeals or kills all that it touches." Jean-Claude Gaudin, president of the Union for French Democracy, a conservative coalition in the National Assembly, adds his voice: "Since 1981, examples of the tyranny of the Socialist Party have abounded" as it "imposes its law" on the legislature. And former Prime Minister Raymond Barre intones with a full heart, "We cherish our liberties so much more these days because we feel our country so insidiously menaced."

But I must not be unfair. Anticommunism and anti-Sovietism have an enormous virtue: they dispense with the necessity of devising the political, economic and strategic alternatives that would diminish the influence of the French Communists and of Moscow. They take the place of thought and of programs. It is no wonder that since the days of McCarthy, they have not forced the Red menace to retreat, nor have they halted its expansion. □

# American Dream

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

for 15,000 workers; today only 2,000 of those jobs remain.

Last October we returned to Homestead, where a group of steelworkers, union officials, local activists, engineers, academics, community leaders and clergy met in the nondescript union hall of United Steel Workers Local 1397, in the shadow of the hulking mill. This landmark gathering, sponsored by the Tri-State Conference on Steel, a regional planning body formed by workers and activists, marked the first time American workers have sat down and drafted a preliminary plan for the economic development of their communities.

At the meeting, Mike Stout, a union grievance man employed at the Homestead works, summed up the attitude among steelworkers: "U.S. Steel is getting out of the steel business and they're getting out of this community. They've raped it, they've soaked it and they're saying, Goodbye, we've squeezed the grape, there's no more left. What we're saying is, If U.S. Steel doesn't give a damn about the future of this valley, then we're going to have to plan for that future ourselves." The Rev. Charles Rawlings, a founder of the Tri-State Conference, seconded him: "We have been like sheep being led to the slaughter of unemployment, into a future without steel mills, without jobs; and our mouths have been stilled and we've had nothing to say. Now it's up to us to plan for a different future, one with a place not just for ourselves but for our children and grandchildren."

This self-reliance contrasts sharply with the attitude most steelworkers and their unions had during the prosperous

*Bruce Schmiechen, Lawrence Daressa and Larry Adelman's new film,* The Business of America . . . , *is available from California Newsreel in San Francisco. It will be telecast on PBS in early May.*

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decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Like most Americans, they assumed their interests were identical to those of the corporations. Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, for five decades an activist "labor priest" in the valley, told us, "As the ordinary steelworker saw his wages become the highest of any blue-collar worker on earth, he came to believe that the man at the top knew what he was doing. He would gripe and growl, but in the matter of investment he trusted the companies and he trusted the system to keep the good life going."

For many steelworkers that faith extended to voting for Ronald Reagan in 1980. One worker, Paul Trout, who lost his job after twenty-six years, described himself as "a super-free-enterprise kind of guy." He said he bought Reagan's economic program "because I always thought what was good for General Motors or U.S. Steel was good for the working man, because he'll have a job. Of course, it didn't turn out that way."

Until recently, the steelworkers simply echoed company demands for government aid in the hope that the mills would be modernized. Together they won import controls, relaxed environmental regulations, accelerated depreciation allowances and reduced taxes. But despite fifteen years of those incentives, the companies actually invested less than half as much in new plants and equipment in 1983 as they had in 1968. Today the American basic steel industry's plant and equipment is, on average, older than any other nation's. Last year, in a desperate bid to avert further closings, steelworkers agreed to wage cuts averaging $250 a month, a total of $3 billion.

David Roderick, chairman of U.S. Steel, explained the company's strategy in an interview with us in 1982: "The duty of management is to make money. . . . Investment dollars are only going to those investments that can offer our shareholders a fair return. They're going to capital-starve the marginal businesses." Roderick considered 20 percent a fair return on new investment. U.S. Steel has been averaging about 6 percent, poor indeed compared with many American corporations but still twice that of the company's Japanese competitors. When he announced the shutdown last December 27, Roderick was applauded on Wall Street, and U.S. Steel stock was up five-eighths at the close of the day's trading.

Prof. Robert Hayes of the Harvard Business School characterizes steel management's hardheaded emphasis on the short-term bottom line as "portfolio management." He told us, "They're essentially just moving assets around on a financial chessboard. They're more interested in buying and selling companies than in making and selling products." The purchase of Marathon Oil is only the latest move in a diversification strategy U.S. Steel has pursued since the 1960s, which has included investments in plastics, chemicals, high-rises, a shopping center, even a hotel at Disney World. Today less than 25 percent of U.S. Steel's assets are in the steel business.

What remains of the steel industry is being radically restructured. Companies are concentrating on only the most profitable plants and product lines and are abandoning the rest of the market to foreign imports and domestic minimills. The twenty-nine mills affected by U.S. Steel's Christmas closing—many of them old, outmoded facilities—produce low-margin structural, bar, wire, plate and other steel. Yet on February 2 the company announced it would buy National Steel. National's mills are among the country's most modern and efficient, and they produce the profitable flat-rolled steel, which is used for automobiles and appliances. Despite the February 15 Justice Department decision to reject the merger agreement between Jones & Laughlin (itself a subsidiary of the conglomerate LTV) and Republic Steel, the country's third and fourth largest steelmakers, respectively, joint ventures and other combinations between steel companies are expected to continue. These even include importing raw steel from foreign competitors and doing the finishing work in America. Analysts now predict that Bethlehem will soon begin the hunt for a merger partner. Both Inland and Armco have been mentioned. All agree with Roderick that the strategy of shedding old capacity while acquiring modern and profitable facilities "will continue with a vengeance."

The people who met in Homestead last October have radically different priorities. Rather than thinking of ways to strengthen a quarterly balance sheet, they seek to provide job opportunities in new, socially useful industries. "For the first time we're asking, How can we employ capital to make people productive, rather than employ people to make capital profitable," one steelworker asserted.

The group opened the conference with an analysis of what the Pittsburgh area had to offer the nation. The result was a regional resources report, which identified six strengths: a large work force skilled in metal fabrication and machining; 100 billion tons of known coal reserves; the capacity to produce 8 million tons of steel a year; the nation's leading railway-equipment industry; top-notch metallurgical and robotics research facilities; and a location in the middle of what is still America's most populous region.

The conference participants then discussed how those resources could be utilized to meet the nation's needs and to create jobs for workers in the tri-state region, which embraces West Virginia, eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Two possible growth areas quickly became apparent: energy and infrastructure.

The Northeast, once self-sufficient in energy, has become dependent on expensive imported oil and unreliable nuclear power. Why couldn't the region's steel mills and factories provide the materials for building power plants to burn its abundant coal? Nonpolluting technologies recently developed by local firms make coal-fired power stations an attractive alternative. In addition they could fabricate "downstream" elements in the production chain: machines to mine the coal and convert it into slurry, which can be transported cheaply. Producing energy-efficient co-generation equipment and districtwide heating systems—appropriate technology for the Northeast's densely populated cities—is another possibility.

It is also clear that the railroads, ports and bridges—built

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with Pittsburgh steel—have deteriorated badly. Couldn't the steel mills be modernized to provide the massive amounts of structural and plate steel that will be needed to rebuild them?

Implementing those and other plans that are yet to be developed will cost billions of dollars—$25 billion over a decade by one estimate. But David Arthur Page, a Pittsburgh economic planner, pointed out that doing nothing will cost more. He has drawn up a "social balance sheet" which shows that unemployment insurance, welfare benefits and lost tax revenues will cost the tri-state region's economy $20 billion in 1984.

Conference participants agreed that private corporations would not make a long-term investment of that magnitude, and they discussed "nonmarket" approaches for reindustrializing the Monongahela Valley. Frank O'Brien, a retired steelworker and former president of his union local, cited the Tennessee Valley Authority's rural electrification program as precedent for government action to achieve a desirable economic objective that private industry won't touch.

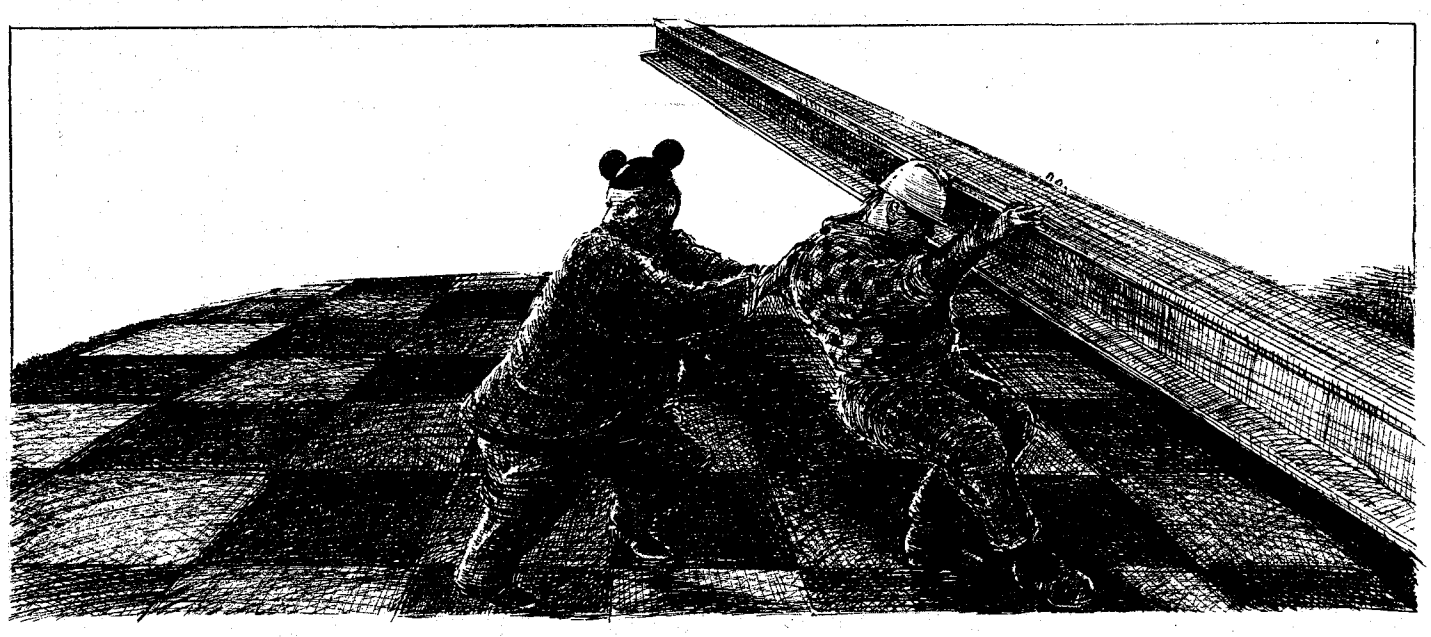
Staughton Lynd, who is a lawyer for the Homestead U.S.W. local and one of the founders of the Tri-State Conference, reminded the group that the Reagan tax-cut program had given business and wealthy investors $50 billion a year to reindustrialize America. "This was a little like throwing paint at a wall and expecting to see the 'Mona Lisa,'" he said. Why couldn't this money be channeled to a regionally controlled development bank?

Many participants agreed that cutting the military budget could be another source of funding for the project. Chuck McCollester, a shop steward at Westinghouse Air Brake, declared, "The battle for the future security of the U.S. is not being fought on the beaches of Lebanon or Grenada; it is being waged right here on the banks of the Monongahela." And Mark Green, president of The Democracy Project, pointed out that "in the last half of 1981 alone, forty-eight weapons systems had cost-overruns of $47 billion—or twice the ten-year cost of this plan."

Although they are convinced that private industry cannot do the job, the steelworkers oppose nationalization. "Can you imagine a steel industry run by the likes of a Ronald Reagan or a Jimmy Carter?" asked Mike Stout. Instead, they are trying to design a locally accountable and democratically controlled regional planning authority to manage investment and run the mills. One idea calls for an elected board with representatives from government, labor, small business and the community.

Because job creation and human resource development is the starting point of their plan, the steelworkers' approach differs from the industrial policies advocated by investment banker Felix Rohatyn and Presidential hopefuls Walter Mondale and Gary Hart. Those plans treat job creation and preservation as byproducts of a policy whose primary purpose is to help mature industries become more competitive and to encourage new high-tech industries. As Harley Shaiken, a technology analyst at M.I.T., warned the audience: "If all we do is speak of being internationally competitive, we may end up not like Japan but like Brazil, with a small number of very competitive firms and an awful lot of unemployed people. The real question is, How can we utilize the existing resources of the area and the skills of the people in order to produce things society needs?"

Those who participated in the conference at Homestead recognize that their plan is in the embryo stage. Years of discussion and refinement lie ahead, and it will never become a reality unless a strong, political movement develops to support it. But the plan was not meant to be a prescription so much as the initiation of a political process. As Shaiken said, "The tri-state approach is exciting not because it's a blueprint—it's not—but because it's a rallying point for people seeking to gain some control over their lives." Maureen Trout, a steelworker laid off from the Homestead plant, told us: "I think we've been very complacent. It's been too easy to pack your lunch box and go down to U.S. Steel, put in your eight hours and forget about it. We've got to get totally involved with the running of companies. It's going to take a long time. But now is the time to start." □



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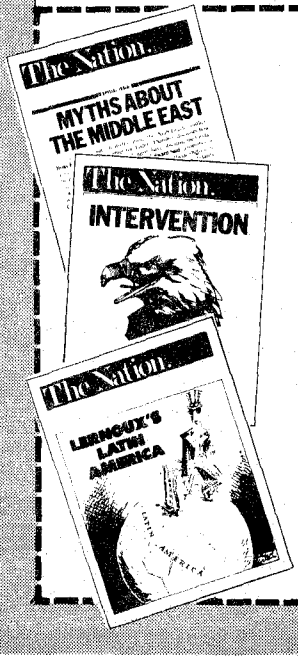


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BERNARD McCABE

SELECTED LETTERS OF E.M. FORSTER: Volume One: 1879–1920. *Edited by Mary Lago and P.N. Furbank. Harvard University Press. 344 pp. $20.*

Almost everybody has come to feel that E.M. Forster, whatever his limitations, had his heart in the right place—everybody, that is, except those Anglo-Indian colonels who, returning from leave with their memsahibs, read *A Passage to India* from cover to cover and then (or so the story goes) flung it with oaths into the Red Sea. The first volume of his selected letters largely reinforces this view of the man. He is thoughtful, kindly, amusing, decently humane in his views, perceptive about what had gone wrong with the world he lived in and reluctant to preach, posture or dictate how to put things right. His lifelong aversion to what Stephen Dedalus called "big words that make us all unhappy" is evident from the earliest pages. At age 20, he comments on Shaw's *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*: "Wonderfully clever and amusing, but they make me feel bad inside." The forceful imposition of ideas always made Forster feel bad inside.

His novels were most successful in their understated but sharp critique of the insincerities and confusions of the middle-class world—"the civilization"—he grew up in and disliked so much. Wit was his quietly efficient weapon. While still an undergraduate, he wrote his mother about the descent of some relatives on King's College: "On arriving we examined the chapel. Loud were the exclamations of approval. Aunt Eliza repeated, 'It is so sumptuous, so rich—like woven silk, so . . . ' and she waved her hands. 'Fine building, remarkably fine building,' kept on remarking Uncle Frank." The dry Forsterian touch is already there. Forster was 21 in 1900, and the Edwardianisms in early letters are engaging: a friend in Italy "has a topping time"; when he sets out for India in 1912 he is worried about his pith helmet, asks for tea baskets from the Army and Navy Stores, advises a friend to bring "plenty of visiting cards" and to "avoid celluloid underclothing."

From India in 1912 he evokes a very different world, one which will turn up transformed, twelve years later, in *A Passage to India*. Here he is visiting a Hindu doctor friend:

> The house is small, and full of people who come in without being announced and sit over the room, or even on one's bed: I had three there last night, visiting Masood who lies sick of the plague-innoculation in the bed adjoining. They were nice chaps & talked English, and we had quite a merry time. Presently food was brought . . . and they ate that on the bed too, sitting cross legged and shoeless. Then the dog came in, and then someone brought a cockatoo. . . . All the time I was half undressed, and the curtain being drawn—exposed to the view of other guests or patients or poor relations who were grouped on the sitting room sofa.

This sort of thing makes pleasant enough reading. But naturally we hope for more from the author of *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*. These letters cover almost all the years of his novel-writing career, so we look for insights into the novels themselves. We also look for hints that might help solve the puzzle of why he published no novels during the last forty-seven years of his long life. After the posthumous publication of his homosexual novel, *Maurice* (completed in 1914), and of his homosexual short stories, and after the appearance of P.N. Furbank's frank biography, we naturally look, too, for insights into that hitherto hidden side of Forster's life.

What he wrote to others about his art (or what survives of what he wrote) doesn't amount to much. He tells Edward Garnett, oddly, that the short stories are better than the novels. More than once he announces a special liking for *The Longest Journey* (1907). He defends the privately circulated *Maurice* several times ("It's a comfort to feel one has done something"). But other comments are sparse and largely self-deprecatory: *A Room With a View* (1908) is "a slight sketch of bourgeois life"; *Howards End* (1910), "a stodgy novel." One pungent remark written to Siegfried Sassoon while working on *A Passage to India* should, however, bring solace to many creative people: "While trying to write my novel I wanted to scream aloud like a maniac." On the whole, though, except in the letters from Egypt (of which, more later) and some from India, one would never guess that Forster's enthusiasms and intensities, his scorn for social hypocrisy and his passionate sincerity about life's potentialities were all being spun out in his fiction while these urbane letters were being written.

Why did he stop writing novels? In a 1913 letter to the Ulster novelist Forrest Reid, he is already confessing that his writing is blocked: "I am dried up. Not in my emotions, but in their expression. I cannot write at all. . . . Please do not mention this, as few people know. It often makes me very unhappy." In his biography, Furbank, who edited the letters with Mary Lago, says Forster was "wrecked by success," specifically the general acclaim for *Howards End* and then again for *A Passage to India*. Furbank also insists on the other likely explanation, Forster's frustration at being unable to write openly on homosexual themes, though the specifically homosexual material in *Maurice* and in most of the posthumous short stories hardly suggests that Forster had a rich hidden vein to mine in that area.

The letters offer another explanation to me. The last section of the book covers the years of World War I. Forster had considered volunteering for an ambulance unit. "All one can do in this world of maniacs is to pick up the poor tortured broken people and try to mend them," he wrote. In the end, however, he spent most of those years in Egypt, working to identify dead or wounded soldiers. Yet despite that involvement with the great catastrophe, his letters show him curiously evasive about it on the whole. He actively avoided military service but never claimed to be a conscientious objector. In one 1917 letter he states, rather coldly, "If I killed someone I did not know I should not worry afterwards, I fancy, whereas I do worry in a dumb way that others go to be killed." And writing to Bertrand Russell, who was jailed for pacifism, he firmly rejects any involvement for himself in public

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acts that might suggest that he was part of a common civilization and had duties toward it:

> Though of course there is a connection between civilisation and our private desires and impulses and actions, it is a connection as meaningless as that between a word and the letters that make it up. . . . The war will only end through exhaustion and nausea. All that is good in humanity must be sweated and vomited out together with what is bad. So far we may agree, but I [am] not with you who seem to think that personal decency now (and by personal decency we are both understanding the real article that may include martyrdom) will facilitate a more decent society in the future.

In 1918 he writes:

> To preserve a *particular* individual whom one knows (not a class however closely it may generically express him) is to my present mood the only sacrifice worth making.

His statement reminds me of Christopher Isherwood, a friend and admirer of Forster, who announced that he based his pacifism during World War II solely on the fact that a former lover was in the German Army, and he might have to shoot at him. Forster's similar supremely individualistic position *could* be said to show that his heart was in the right place, but his mind seems to have been less so. One recognizes the artist's struggle not to be drowned in the general and his need to live in the particular, yet there is an unattractive, ultimately sentimental and even selfish side to the *Two Cheers for Democracy* approach to life. And it can be a disabling one for a novelist who, as Forster points out, should be concerned with absorbing and recreating "realities."

I can think of only three places in his work where he directly faces the war. One is a brief 1922 dialogue on the graves at Gallipoli; another, more oblique reference comes in the short story "Dr. Woolacott" (1927). Most interestingly, in his very tentative essay on T.S. Eliot (1928), Forster suggests that the horror-vision he senses behind *The Waste Land* has grown out of the war, what he calls "Armadillo-Armageddon." Forster then recalls his own quiet experience of hearing that the war had begun and comments, "Most of us forget such an experience, or do not feel it acutely." In a 1914 diary he wrote of the war, "It is here to give me experiences if I choose to receive them." Such experiences—and I don't necessarily


KILLINGS
Calvin Trillin

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mean direct experiences—dominated the greatest post-war writing, but Forster seems to have chosen not to receive them, and his creativity withered. In 1919 he wrote to G.H. Ludolf, revealing what must be one of his bleakest visions of his future as a creative writer:

> But it's so puzzling and queer to feel that one's the last little flower of a vanishing civilisation, so exasperating to know . . . that in the future people probably won't mind whether they understand or not, and that this attempt to apprehend the universe through the senses and the mind is a luxury the next generation won't be able to afford.

Forster was brought up without a father and surrounded by, cosseted by, a group of adoring women, some of whom he loved. As an adult he had many women friends, the Countess von Arnim and Virginia Woolf among them. Half the letters in this volume are to women. But he also had a strong misogynist streak, nowhere more evident than in *The Longest Journey*, his semi-autobiographical and surely least successful novel. In that book we might welcome Forster's lively attack on the self-confident, muddling middle-class world, with its snobberies and covert materialisms, and sympathize with his romantic and passionate pleas for friendship, naturalness and the freedom of the imagination. But difficulties crop up with his yearning portrait of the rough but pure-hearted country lad, Stephen Wonham, burly precursor of the protagonist's equally embarrassing greenwood chum in *Maurice*. But the big problem is that from the first chapter, when young Agnes bursts in and disrupts a Cambridge discussion group—"'Ladies!' whispered everyone, in great agitation"—the novel pursues an attack not on indissoluble marriage, as in the Shelley poem from which the title comes, but on any kind of attachments to women. Occasional misogynist grumbles emerge in the letters, though nothing as fierce as his 1926 snappish retrospective comment on the suffragist Christabel Pankhurst:

> I thought, "It's unpleasant to me, but it won't go further" and spoke with false enthusiasm of women's rights. "She shall have all she wants. I can still get away from her," I thought. I grudged her nothing except my company.

Yet, paradoxically, the most remarkable letters in the book—written from Cairo and detailing with great frankness the progress of his first serious love affair, with a local tram conductor named Mohammed el Adl—are written to a woman, Florence Barger, with whom Forster clearly had a very close rapport. One regrets that her answers, which must have been extraordinarily sensitive and responsive, have not survived.

Here at last, as Forster describes a growing mutual love and passion, his admiration for the "right judgment and sincere heart" of his friend, his feeling of having triumphed over the old enemy civilization's "nonsense and artificial difficulties," we feel that we are in the presence of a writer of great delicacy and strength. The comic spirit persists. In one letter he describes a visit to Mohammed's home in Alexandria, and a surprising venturesomeness emerges:

> They are situate in a lane near the station: nearly nearly a slum—ducks & chicks paddle, and O my dear the sanitation! only means of washing is to strip in the passage under the stairs and pour little tins of water over each other which slither away into a far yet not far enough latrine. . . . I don't know that the room was very clean either, but I seldom touched bottom, as on entering you crawled straight on to a sofa, and big bed, table, and wardrobe paved the rest.

Pleasant to imagine the small suburban figure of Forster, arriving in familiar rumpled suit, permanent collar and tie, trousers high on the ankle and large boots, and then reveling in these conditions.

The affair was to dribble away in a Forsterian muddle about a legacy and money, but it was immensely important to him. He reveals that, apart from some indeterminate Cambridge gambolings, this, at 38, was his first full sexual experience, "this enormous torrent in me." That may help to explain what many readers have felt in Forster—the absence of convincing physicality in his accounts of love and passion. (Remember the preposterous monk and beast stuff in *Howards End*.) Forster recognized his problem, the difficulty he had in connecting the prose and the passion. "I wish I was writing the latter half of *Maurice* now," he writes to Barger in 1917. "I now know so much more." And in a letter to Sassoon in 1920, "Nothing is more obdurate to artistic treatment than the carnal, but it has to be got in: everything has to be got in." But he never did seem able to get it in, except perhaps in "The Other Boat" (completed in 1958), a powerful short story with a homosexual theme.

So these letters, especially the Egyptian ones, turn out to be full of interest. The editing is efficient and helpful, though footnotes heavily sprinkle the page and nag away at the eye and attention. We are given much information about obscure persons and events, and much of it is good to have. But does anyone likely to read this book need to be told that Dante wrote the *Vita Nuova*? We certainly shouldn't be told that when Forster writes from India, "Some times I bicycle, some times by the tide of Ganges do complain," he is referring to Psalm 137:1. But this is a good book. It sent me immediately back to the novels, to Forster's Italy, Forster's England, Forster's India. Pleasure and gratitude almost everywhere. *A Passage to India* remains magnificent, *Maurice* has its moments, as does even *The Longest Journey*. *Howards End*, so often disparaged nowadays, seems full of power and prophecy despite its obvious weaknesses. In a brilliant essay, F.R. Leavis condemned as "unreal" the central event in *Howards End*, the marriage of philistine, modern-efficient Henry Wilcox to the gentle, humane, philanthropic Margaret Schlegel. Yet such unlikely conjunctions are common enough in reality, as Forster well knew. After all, the two great attachments in his life were to an Egyptian tram conductor and an English constable. No doubt the policeman, Bill, will turn up in Volume Two of the letters. I look forward to it. □

THE CATERPILLAR

By dense green light
Under a fir bough
It comes down slowly
Through mist over the creek,
As green, as curled
As a willow leaf, not falling
But holding its one strand
Comes down, having fed
All summer, to spin now
The next turn of its way
Down thirty drifting feet
By a thread of itself, being spun
To a beginning, but suddenly
Broken at a touch
Of the headlong current and gone
Downstream and at a splash
And flurry gone again
Into a different dream
In the mouth of a rainbow.

*David Wagoner*

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# Meredith, the Poet

EDWARD HIRSCH

William Meredith has published seven books of poetry over the past forty years. He has been a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets since 1964 and a member of the National Academy of Arts and Letters since 1968. He was also the consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress from 1978 through 1980. So it is fair to say that he has enjoyed a certain recognizable public presence. And yet Meredith has fallen into the peculiar limbo of writers who are more known about than seriously read.

Especially since the publication of his selected poems, *Earth Walk*, in 1970, many readers seem to feel that they already know how Meredith writes, ignoring his new books and consequently missing the quiet sea change that has taken place in his work. There has been almost no serious analysis of his writing, and the reviews of his recent books have been scanty, slighting, myopic, often begrudging. We are apparently unaccustomed to a poet who pays close, steady, scrupulous attention to our common democratic life. Meredith is a calm and thoughtful writer, a slow rather than a quick study, and that modesty has worked against him. Few seem to have recognized the novelty and depth, the wry wisdom of the two books he has published in the past decade: *Hazard, the Painter* (1975) and *The Cheer* (1980).

*Hazard, the Painter* is a sequence of sixteen lyrics that create a voice unlike anything else in Meredith's work. The author refers to the book as a "characterization"; his publisher calls it "a miniature novel in verse." Both descriptions are accurate to a degree, though together the poems seem to me something less than a novel in verse, even a miniature one, and something more than a characterization. Hazard is Meredith's precarious alter ego—akin to John Berryman's Henry, though with a more explicit distance between the poet and his creation—a painter who for two years has obsessively painted a single subject: a parachutist drifting hazardously but safely through an empty, expansive sky. (Hazard is an unabashed Bruegelian, and it is hard not to feel that his final painting would look like a cross between "The Harvest" and "The Fall of Icarus.") On a bright October day Hazard tries a parachute jump himself in order to experience the full feeling of flight:

> This is what for two years now
> he has been painting, in a child's
> palette
> —not the plotted landscape that holds
> dim
> below him, but the human figure
> dangling safe,
> guyed to something silky, hanging
> here,
> full of half-remembered instruction
> but falling, and safe.
> ("Hazard's Optimism")

This stanza establishes the key tone and feeling of the book: Hazard's sense of a luck that inexplicably holds, of a human figure dangling and vulnerable but also safe. *Hazard* makes its personal and political grudges clear (against "one-note" painters who repeat themselves endlessly and dishonest politicians like Nixon), but it also tries to explain an odd, recurrent feeling of rightness, the sense of "a few things made by men,/a galaxy made well."

One of the primary things that Hazard shares with Meredith is a Jeffersonian vision of America at a time when "the culture is in late imperial decline." Both think we live in a barbarous time of deep cultural and political inadequacies, and the sequence frequently presents the artist in the unlikely civic stance of the concerned citizen. John Updike has noticed that many of our writers are willing to be mayor, but few are excited to be citizens. Meredith is an exception. Thus we see Hazard not only taking a parachute jump and facing "a Sunday in the decline" but also wryly attending a jazz benefit for McGovern at his in-laws' partially refurbished country house ("Politics"), and later somewhat grudgingly scraping a McGovern-Shriver sticker off his car, wistfully daydreaming of the nostalgic slogan "Madly for Adlai," unable to shake "his unpopular conviction/that his nation has bitterly misspoken itself" ("Nixon's the One"). For a poet, Meredith is unusually sensitive to our changing political weather, and the theme of the artist as committed citizen, distressed but loyal, is followed up by such key poems in *The Cheer* as "On Jenkins' Hill" and "A Mild-Spoken Citizen Finally Writes to the White House."

Deeply disturbed as he is by our political mistakes, Hazard rejects what one poem calls Simone de Beauvoir's "civilized Gallic gloom," instead siding with Yeats in calling for "compulsory singing lessons for the soul." In "His Plans for Old Age," Hazard playfully thinks of founding a sect for the radical old, called Oldbodies, "who persist in being at home in the world." In "Hazard's Optimism," Hazard puts himself "in charge of morale in a morbid time," and indeed the fundamental question of the book is how to preserve morale or spirit in a dark period. *The Cheer* takes up the same question, enlarging and deepening it. That book follows the more open, meditative style of *Hazard, the Painter*, but it eliminates the character of Hazard and instead registers the poet's own voice: wise, witty, thoughtful, humane. In a way, *Hazard* is a penultimate book, one which breaks the new ground on which *The Cheer* substantially builds.

Both books conduct a kind of running argument about despair. On one level, *The Cheer*'s title means simply "good cheer" or cheerfulness, as one might toast by saying "Cheers." But this is to my mind the thinnest interpretation. It is certainly true, as Meredith writes in a somewhat fussy "Envoi," that "good cheer has never been what's wrong,/though solemn people mistrust it." It is equally true, however, that good cheer in itself is not much of a solution. Meredith sounds a more profound note when he identifies cheer with courage, writing that "words addressing evil won't turn evil back/but they can give heart." In these terms, cheer suggests a way of taking experience, of facing—and facing down—the worst. Some of the book's finest lyrics—"Parents," "Not Both," a radiant love poem called simply "Poem"—are distinguished by the courage with which they probe the dark complexities of human conduct.

There is a powerful impulse in Meredith's work to move beyond the misgivings, doubts and grievances of so many

*Edward Hirsch is the author of* For the Sleepwalkers *(Alfred A. Knopf), a book of poems.*

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of his contemporaries. In a poem dedicated to Berryman, Meredith says, in his characteristic terms, "Morale is what I think about all the time/now, what hopeful men and women can say and do." Or, in the same poem:

> Friends making off ahead of time
> on their own, I call that willful, John,
> but that's not judgment, only argu-
> ment
> such as we've had before.
> ("In Loving Memory of the Late
> Author of Dream Songs")

Meredith's response is to search for things to praise, remembering that "We are all relicts, of some great joy, wearing black," anxious to counter disaster—even a large cultural disaster, a general sense of things going wrong all around us—with a personal commitment to spiritual health, ultimately determined to accept an intractable world.

Many of the most significant poems in *The Cheer* revolve around one mysterious insight into common human experience. "Parents" explores the complex doubleness of our relationship to our strange familiars, "these friends who become our enemies." Each of the couplet-like stanzas has the heft and authority of an epigram as the poem follows an arc from our first uncomprehending sense of their existence to our final bleak recognition after their deaths:

> . . . Everything
> they do is wrong, and the worst thing,
> they all do it, is to die,
> taking with them the last explanation,
> how we came out of the wet sea
> or wherever they got us from,
> taking the last link
> of that chain with them.
> Father, mother, we cry, wrinkling,
> to our uncomprehending children and
> grandchildren.

Deceptively simple, "Poem" considers the violence and calm of swans on the river, remembering the fifty-nine wild swans that Yeats counted and flushed into a legend. Yeats said they flew off "lover by lover" but missed the fact that one of them must have been without a mate. The poem mulls this circumstance over, demystifying the legendary process, slyly suggesting that "a god putting on swan-flesh/to enter a mortal girl/is only a way of looking at love-trouble." At its close, the poem suddenly turns intimate with a moving final line: "When I am not with you/I am always the fifty-ninth."

"Not Both," one of the book's most striking poems, raises a series of mutually exclusive questions whose clear statement only deepens their mystery: the husband of a clubfooted woman mangled by a train was either trying to free her foot from the switch-V or was holding it there; a tall girl and her "over-handsome" brother who lived together for seven years before marrying other people either had an incestuous relationship or did not; a woman who went sailing on the Chesapeake on a windy day was trying to drown herself or she drowned accidentally, but "not both." The truth remains impenetrable. The fourth example darkens the poem's mystery by making it personal:

> Either before I die I'll falter and tell
> the strange secret that I was given once
> as a token
> or I'll manage to carry it with me.

What "Not Both" dramatizes is the strange burden of our uncertainties, our doubts, our unknowable secrets. The weight of this uncertainty is further deepened by a statement about transcendence, the recognition that "Somebody knows or nobody knows these answers." It follows this insight with the final startled and startling realization that "One of those two appalling things is true too." These lines present a version of Pascal's wager, a statement of our ultimate uncertainty, and they also suggest that in some profound, inexorable way both of these possibilities—only one of which is actually true—are truly "appalling."

It is in light of such dark insights that Meredith's sense of praise or gratitude must finally be understood. His work implicitly suggests that we can recognize the hardest truths about ourselves and still live in the world. His is a complex and committed optimism, but an optimism not without shadows. *The Cheer* is a work to put beside Randall Jarrell's *Lost World* and Elizabeth Bishop's *Geography III*, one of those rare, culminating books of poetry that help us understand our lives. It is William Meredith's understated masterpiece, and it makes him one of our indispensable contemporary poets. □

# Crime: Murder American-Style

ANN JONES

KILLINGS. *By Calvin Trillin. Ticknor & Fields. 231 pp. $14.95.*

Calvin Trillin's fans are used to carcasses barbequed or pan fried and never human. Deadly battles rage between *chefs de cuisine* in rival chicken shacks, not between testy men with shotguns in Florida or California or Harlan County, Kentucky. But *Killings* has nothing to do with what Alice B. Toklas called "murder in the kitchen." It is about the real thing—homicide, dire accident and "wrongful death."

For fifteen years, beginning in 1967, Trillin's enviable job was to roam the United States and submit an article every three weeks for *The New Yorker*'s "U.S. Journal." "Once or twice every year," he says, "I found myself at the scene of a killing," and the essays on those occasions have been gathered in chronological order in this volume. Working for *The New Yorker*, Trillin was not obliged to cover "newsworthy" killings—violent homicides featuring multiple victims or, at least, a celebrity. He didn't have to search out typical killings illustrative of national homicidal trends. His assignment was to cover whatever "sounded interesting"; he was free to write about any poor fool who happened unexpectedly to buy six feet of landscape. "When someone dies suddenly shades are drawn up," Trillin remarks, and "the specificity of what is revealed" is what attracted him.

He found some pretty specific characters: a trigger-happy hillbilly named Hobart Ison, a former member of the Warlocks turned police operative, "a repentant, evangelical, born-again Christian Russ Defector" named Sergei, a Navajo militant, a seven-times-married criminal lawyer from Miami, a paranoid Laotian refugee, a purveyor of health foods named Walter Bopp. With quiet dispassion Trillin tells the stories of these and others who met a bad end or hastened others away before their time.

Facts are hard to pin down. Sometimes Trillin doesn't know who done it. Was the hotshot Miami attorney dispatched by Cuban clients in the drug syndicate? Was old Walter Bopp killed by common thieves or by "the sort

*Ann Jones is the author of* Women Who Kill *(Fawcett).*

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of cultists who beat up elderly vegetarians?" Did Sergei actually shoot himself? Although Trillin snoops and speculates, he mostly doesn't know why the killings occurred. Why would one partner in a restaurant deal shoot the other for a few thousand dollars' worth of insurance? Why would two Chicano families persist in a feud so deadly it made a survivor happy to go to jail?

It's often not the killing itself that concerns Trillin but how it jars the community, uniting people in common outrage or dividing them in guilty recriminations. What did the Anglo officials of Gallup, New Mexico, owe the Navajo minority? What responsibility did Iowa churchgoers bear for the Laotian refugees they sponsored? What is the duty of a Tennessee town to one small, abused girl?

Trillin's interest—and ours—lies not in how some of us die but in how we live. Wonder why one C.B. fanatic shot his "good buddy" in the belly? You might just as well ask why they spent long afternoons arguing about nonsense at Lou's Place, a small-town bar where "men use bad language in front of women, who use bad language back." Want to know (as did the whole guilty town of Fairfield, Iowa) why a Laotian family would attempt mass suicide? It may be, as one citizen observed, "we're trying to find reasons for something [they] never intended there to be a reason for."

Trillin finds suggestions at least in the "context for the killing"—in the peculiar ambiance of different "thoroughly American places." He describes what sociologists would call a conflict of cultures. A hillbilly guns down a trespassing filmmaker. A frustrated Navajo abducts a New Mexico mayor. The first female coal miners complain that male co-workers harass them "up your one side and down the other." Sometimes the conflict is more intimate—as in the case of Savannah scion George Mercer 4th, who perhaps set out to bilk his own parents in a kidnap scam; or that of Lawrence Hartman, an exemplary Iowa farmer who in middle age, bedazzled by the big city and a young cocktail waitress, beat his wife to death.

Ordinary people find the dramas puzzling, and even the law can't seem to straighten things out. A man who murders his ex-wife and her friend is judged insane and confined to a hospital for only two and a half years. His daughter, who evens the score with a perfect crime, brings the police evidence against herself. Some killers—perhaps not the right ones—get long prison terms. In other cases the jury simply can't decide. Reporters generally like trials, perhaps "transfixed by a process in which the person being asked a question actually has to answer it." Yet the answers, as Trillin recounts them, are often lies, and often baffling. No wonder people make up elaborate stories to explain the bizarre deaths of strangers and to rehabilitate slain or slaying members of their own families. Every explanation is inadequate to the event of sudden, violent death.

In the introduction Trillin says he'd be "comfortable" calling these essays "human interest stories" if that phrase "didn't bring to mind an item about a motherly cocker spaniel adopting orphaned ducklings." Certainly there's a lot of interest here in humans, in all their guises and in habitats as varied as Miami Beach and Grundy County, Iowa. But there are also enough bad vibrations to make any soufflé fall flat in its bain-marie. These are the kind of human interest stories in which the cunning little orphaned ducklings, having


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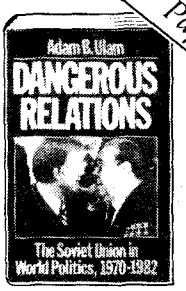


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nothing better to do on a rainy afternoon, bludgeon the motherly cocker spaniel. These dark tales go to show that even between meals, Calvin Trillin is an enlightening fellow and one of the best writers around. □

# Trial: Disorder in the Court

DAVID BRUCK

"HOW CAN YOU DEFEND THOSE PEOPLE?": The Making of a Criminal Lawyer. *By James S. Kunen. Random House. 271 pp. $15.95.*

The picture of criminal court that James Kunen provides in this spare and witty narrative covering his two and a half years as an assistant public defender in Washington, D.C., is far different from the memoirs defense attorneys usually produce. A truthful account of life at court is, above all, a chronicle of bureaucracy, and Kunen is an acute observer of this particular bureaucracy, at once so visible and so little known.

His initiation begins as a law student intern in a New York police court, where he wins a dismissal for his first client, a teen-age girl accused of prostitution, simply by telling the judge that she isn't a prostitute. In that Old Bailey of assembly-line justice, even a *claim* of innocence is so out of the ordinary—and so potentially time-consuming—that the system ejects the case the moment it is made.

Though Kunen's subsequent courtroom successes did not come so easily, they all reconfirmed the lesson of his first one: in an overcrowded criminal court system, and that includes every criminal court system in every American city, the court's time is more important than guilt—or innocence or truth or justice or anything else you can name. The constitutional right to trial by jury may only be exercised by a tiny fraction of all criminal defendants, but the threat to exercise it—to use up time, to gum up the works—is a powerful tool, and the only one that most defendants have. Thus, the defense attorney's job is first and foremost to manipulate the court's lack of time, and its obsession with saving time, to his client's advantage.

Lawyers, prosecutors and judges all have too much to do, as Kunen explains, and so most of what they must do gets put off till later. When later rolls around there is even more to do, so cases get put off yet again. And so it goes, the delays serving the interests of everyone, as Kunen observes, except the victims of crime—who don't count for much since they're the only ones in the system who neither have nor are lawyers.

Still, from time to time this stylized dance of delay does culminate in a trial, and Kunen gives details of a few that he handled as a public defender. He renders well a defense lawyer's feelings in the courtroom—the scariness of the realization that someone else's fate has been placed in your fumbling hands, and the odd mixture of idealism, ego and cynicism that fuels the work.

This book may annoy some civil libertarians and criminal defense practitioners. Kunen finds a certain irony in the idealism of well-paid professional emissaries from the sliver of white Washington referred to in the book as "Caucasia," as they uphold the constitutional rights of poor black defendants accused (usually justly) of preying on poor black victims. Kunen occasionally turns snide (though not so often as in some badly edited excerpts from the book published in *Harper's* two years ago), and readers looking for evidence of 1960s idealism turned to bitterness will find traces of it in the author's sketches of a couple of his associates at the Public Defender Service. But Kunen's irony is only a fair reflection of what our civil rights look like when they're put into rough practice in the gritty world, and his book does justice to the importance of the constitutional rights of criminal defendants even while it relates the curious nuances of their everyday application.

Kunen describes the criminal courts accurately and deftly. Anyone who has witnessed the barren interventions of the juvenile justice system in the lives of ghetto children will recognize his description of juvenile court: "It was a self-contained, self-referential system, like a court held below deck in a rudderless ship—everything seemed orderly and purposeful until you stepped outside." Outside, of course, is the social pathology of the streets the children come from, and the brutality and hopelessness that await them in the children's prisons that constitute the judge's "treatment" alternative. Equally recognizable is Kunen's honest description of his own self-conscious attempts at hard-nosed dealings with police officers. And anyone who has been propelled into public defense work by political idealism or identification with the downtrodden will be familiar with Kunen's shamefaced realization after he has interviewed the mother of a juvenile client's mugging victim:

> An intelligent and compassionate woman, she was concerned for her son, and her community, and even for the boy who had attacked her son. Where did I fit into this?

Kunen's narrative skillfully re-creates the jumbled quality of a criminal defender's (or prosecutor's) work. All the stories overlap and crisscross one another through the months and years of the author's sojourn in the P.D.S. office. Divided into sections that wryly mimic the structure of a legal treatise (§1.01, §1.02, etc.), the book cuts from episode to episode, with each case looming momentarily into focus every few weeks, or months, just as cases do in the work life of a criminal lawyer. The story of a 15-year-old girl who is a professional bank robber (and goes right back to robbing banks after Kunen obtains her release) intersects with that of a peculiarly amiable paranoid schizophrenic charged with the unprovoked murder of his next-door neighbor's boyfriend. A juvenile client charged with a minor weapons offense comes back a year later as an adult charged with murder; over the next few chapters, Kunen prepares him for a guilty plea and fifteen years to life in Lorton Penitentiary. Meanwhile, he wins an acquittal for a small-time marijuana salesman through a rather preposterous experimental recreation of the crime, some amusing courtroom histrionics and a suggestion that the pot found on the pavement at his client's feet might have been lying there by coincidence when the police happened on the scene.

This kaleidoscope of human misery, humor and poignancy—and of the system's contradictory rationales for processing it all—finds its reflection in the mood of the courtroom. Describing the sentencing of his murder client to a bone-crushing prison term, Kunen writes:

*David Bruck is a criminal defense lawyer and former public defender in Columbia, South Carolina.*

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> As was generally true at sentencings, there was no hint of moral condemnation, because judges know that society is unjust and the defendants started the race way behind the line; or because they are steeped in a psychologically deterministic outlook and feel that no man creates himself; or because they are racist and feel that the defendants are less than human and thus do not inhabit the same moral universe as they; or because they expect the world to be nuked out of existence, so what does it matter? Still, like engineers aboard the *Titanic*, the judges do their jobs, because they have to be done to keep the ship moving, for as long as it can move.

Kunen is more at home when he's describing than when he's advocating: his explications of the constitutional rights of criminal defendants are adequate, but hardly compelling. In this respect, Morton Hunt's *The Mugging* (1970) remains a better and more sensitive exploration of why, for better and for worse, our criminal courts work the way they do. Nonlawyers like Hunt are at an advantage in conveying an understanding of the criminal justice system, since they're not hampered by the nagging sense of divided loyalties that a lawyer is bound to feel as he serves up the secrets of his mystified profession to public scrutiny. There's a slightly nervous undertone in *"How Can You Defend Those People?"* as if Kunen wrote it with one anxious eye on the reactions of his professional peers, and the other on an increasingly law-and-order public. But that is just to say that the book is what it is, the journal of a novice lawyer writing about his own odd profession. Given that modest goal, this readable, witty and accurate chronicle of life at court serves its purpose well. □

# Punishment: What About It?

BILL BLUM

THE DEATH PENALTY: A Debate. *By Ernest van den Haag and John P. Conrad. Plenum. 305 pp. $16.95.*

As state after state restores its death chamber to working order, the debate over the morality and usefulness of capital punishment has been rekindled. *The Death Penalty: A Debate* is the latest and one of the most thorough contributions to the shrill controversy. Ernest van den Haag, an outspoken conservative ombudsman and a professor of jurisprudence and public policy at Fordham University, argues in behalf of retaining the ultimate penal sanction. John P. Conrad, a sociologist whose credits include tours of duty as chief of research at both the California Department of Corrections and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, takes up the abolitionist banner. The debate follows a free-wheeling format, allowing the partisans to explore a variety of topics, from racial discrimination in the administration of the death penalty to deterrence theory.

While there is little in the book that has not been said before, Conrad and van den Haag approach their tasks with scholarship and zeal and manage to develop some novel, eyebrow-raising perspectives. Conrad renounces the once-fashionable left-liberal ritual of romanticizing the hard-core criminal as an incipient political rebel. The residents of death row, he soberly advises, are, with precious few exceptions, nasty and dangerous individuals. Indeed, of the current crop of approximately 1,300, all but one (a Florida man convicted of raping a minor) have been condemned for murder. Conrad describes himself as a "retributivist"—that is, he believes in punishing criminal offenders simply because they are guilty and society has no other way of assuring that wrong conduct will be clearly defined. Labeling capital punishment as the last vestige of the ancient *lex talionis* (the law of retaliation), Conrad argues that our disapprobation of murder can be satisfactorily expressed by life sentences.

Retribution, of course, is more commonly the rallying cry of capital punishment supporters, who generally insist that our disgust with homicide requires that we demand no less than a life for a life. Van den Haag, however, rejects all that as nonsense. For him, retribution is a subjective matter and cannot objectively justify the death penalty. He places his stock instead in a concerted effort to prove that capital punishment effectively deters murder. Van den Haag finds support for the deterrence

*Bill Blum is a Los Angeles attorney and writer who has served as defense counsel in four death penalty cases.*

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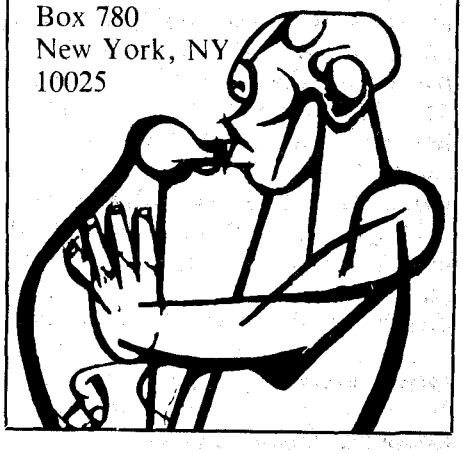

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theory in the well-known 1975 study of economist Isaac Ehrlich. Using "regression analysis" involving elaborate mathematical models dealing with executions conducted between 1933 and 1969, Ehrlich claimed that every execution deters seven to eight potential murders. However, almost all subsequent researchers, including a special team commissioned in 1975 by the National Academy of Sciences, have concluded that Ehrlich's results were invalidated by serious methodological errors. Today, only law-and-order purists take his study as gospel.

On the other hand, Ehrlich's errors by no means prove the abolitionist case. Most abolitionists, Conrad among them, concede that the death penalty may deter a small number of homicides. But that, they reason, misses the point. The real question is whether the death penalty is any more of a deterrent than life in prison. The abolitionist arsenal on this score includes historical studies of states with and without capital punishment, examinations of homicide statistics in states that have abolished the death penalty and comparisons of the United States, Canada and Western European abolitionist nations. Such studies indicate that the death penalty is not a better deterrent than long-term imprisonment.

Unfortunately, the abolitionist material does not stand up to rigorous scientific scrutiny either. Comparative studies suggest, but cannot *prove*, the efficacy of deterrence in a particular jurisdiction. That Michigan and Illinois have similar homicide statistics shows that the absence of the death penalty in Michigan hasn't made that state more dangerous than its retentionist neighbor, but it does not establish that Michigan's homicide rate would not be lower if it had retained the death penalty. Comparative studies are also frequently criticized for ignoring social and economic differences among jurisdictions other than the availability of capital punishment.

In the end, both Conrad and van den Haag resort to common sense arguments. Van den Haag offers the appealing syllogism that since the most precious possession of any human being is life, the greatest disincentive to crime must be the threat of death. Ultimately, he offers a vision of the world as a Hobbesian jungle in which people behave properly only because the gallows—or the lethal injection—awaits wrongdoers.

To this bleak picture, Conrad retorts that van den Haag treats convicted killers as the rational beings of laissez-faire economic theory who carefully and logically assess the risks involved in their evil enterprises before setting upon their unwary victims. In reality, those convicted of capital crimes in this country are disproportionately poor, badly educated and desperate. As Conrad reports, such persons rarely, if ever, contemplate the penal consequences of their offenses before committing them. Ever the liberal, Conrad maintains that good social behavior depends more on the incentives (jobs, education, housing, etc.) by which society rewards productive living than it does on the lessons of punishment.

Most readers of this point-counterpoint will probably reach the same resolution that the Supreme Court arrived at in 1976—that the debate over deterrence is conclusively inconclusive. Such an outcome may not satisfy the purists, but it is nonetheless significant, for in our system of justice the burden of proof rests with the state, which in this context means those who favor capital punishment. It is a burden they plainly cannot carry. On a theoretical level, therefore, the abolitionists emerge victorious in the death penalty debate.

But it is one thing to win an academic exercise and another to win the battle of public policy. The overwhelming majority of Americans enthusiastically endorse capital punishment. Their attitude is not simply the result of manipulation by conservative politicians eager to sell a scared public a quick and false solution to the problems of domestic safety. Such manipulation certainly exists, but the public's attitude is also a direct response to our outrageous crime rates, which have made the United States one of the world's most violent societies.

It is unlikely, therefore, that popular attitudes and official policy toward the death penalty will change substantially until the crime rate plunges to socially acceptable levels. Sadly, the sources of crime in our culture are complex and varied, ranging from familiar forms of economic inequality, racism and sexism to the lack of meaningful gun control, the dissolution of family and community life and the celebration of violence and power in our advertising, TV and movies. Neither these cultural traits nor the aggravated crimes and the public passion for vengeance they sustain show any signs of disappearing in the near future. □

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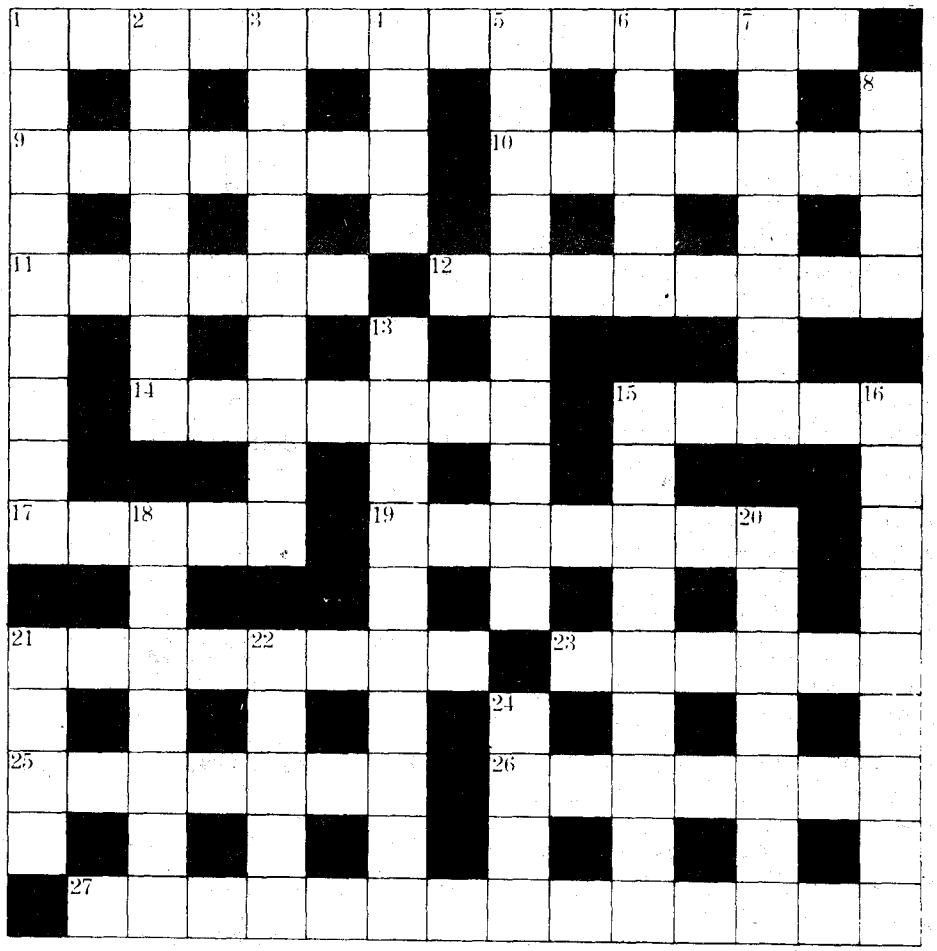
# Crossword Puzzle No. 1998

FRANK W. LEWIS



## ACROSS

1 and 27 Don't shout! Also, you'll have to go along with the club! That's what Teddy said! (5,6,3,5,1,3,5)
9 It might be miles up here! You may not have thought to do things on it. (7)
10 See 22
11 Plays, but not very seriously. (6)
12 Carol, perhaps, hangs around a long-running TV show, considered by the British to be the very best . . . (8)
14 . . . and these could have been good with it, unwinding a string. (7)
15 Artistic merit is not quite all goodness. (5)
17 One who takes the subway in London could wind up in the soup! (5)
19 Sounds like Raffles, for example, could be one of those who might play the 25. (7)
21 and 23 see 1 down
25 Do they box, or just carry things like pigskins? (7)
26 See 22 down
27 See 1 across

## DOWN

1, 23 and 21 across They speak each other. (5,4,4,2,3,5)
2 Jones, of opera—or a butterfly. (7)
3 Possibly a Londoner's home is in, rather than out, of kilter! (It's not far if you're driving.) (9)
4 Nothing soldiers found foreboding when the literary Captain comes up with it. (4)
5 One might hand out the work assignment—the Teamster organization with no award for Excellency is about to query such. (10)
6 Draws quickly, though more than Westerners are included with them. (5)
7 Sounding more senior, in a way, about one. (7)
8 Leave a little silver around, and you'll see what some might be at the sight of it! (4)
13 With it, there's no sense in the sea as anyone can see. (10)
15 Not only those in the "artist's colony" have change for silver, when about to drop behind. (9)
16 Not the treasury of the 6 during the Civil War, though it might imply a standard of sorts. (5,4)
18 A rock conglomeration—a couple of hundred with one sort of bare around it. (7)
20 His barber certainly did a lot of things. (7)
21 Sort of what the woman in office might do! (4)
22, 26 and 10 across What Walt said when he heard voices. (1,4,7,7)
24 Proving at least one boy could rise to become an artist! (4)

**PUZZLED?**

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1997

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# THE NATION FACT-FINDERS

# TOUR TO ISRAEL

## JUNE 16–JUNE 30

Find out for yourself what's going on in Israel and the Occupied Territories. Join *The Nation* Fact-Finders for a thought-provoking journey to the heart of the Middle East.

Leading the tour will be Milton Viorst, distinguished author and *Nation* contributor. Viorst has also written extensively for *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and *National Jewish Monthly*, and is currently completing a book on the Middle East crisis.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- **Meetings with top government and opposition leaders.**
- **In-depth seminars with leading activists in the Israeli peace movement, including** Peace Now, Yesh Gvul ("There Is a Limit"), religious and Sefardi doves, and non-Zionists.
- **A firsthand look at conditions on the West Bank, including:**
  - — A tour of new settlements.
  - — Meetings with leading Gush Emunim activists living in and near Hebron.
  - — Meetings with prominent Palestinians—mayors, lawyers, newspaper editors, writers, teachers and students—in East Jerusalem and on the West Bank.
  - — Background briefings by government and independent experts on the settlement policy and the human rights situation.
- **An examination of "Operation Peace for Galilee," featuring:**
  - — A point-counterpoint on Israel's security needs.
  - — A visit to Kiryat Shmoneh and Kibbutz Misgav Am, two northern border settlements, to talk to residents about the war in Lebanon.
- **Seminars and/or on-site exposure to other important aspects of Israeli society and politics, including:**
  - — Anti-Semitism and the experience of the Holocaust.
  - — Religion and the state.
  - — Non-Jewish minorities in Israel.
  - — Feminist activism.
  - — The economy: problems and solutions.
  - — The Ashkenazi-Sefardi gap.
- **Plus a sampling of Israel's natural, historical and cultural wealth, including:**
  - — Massada and the Dead Sea.
  - — A special walking tour of the Old City of Jerusalem led by a religious peace activist.
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  - — Travel through lush upper Galilee, the strategic Golan Heights and the ancient city of Acre.
  - — A night at the guest house of Kibbutz Nof Ginossar, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.
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Last year, *The Nation* Fact-Finders explored the European peace movements in East and West Germany and Holland, and returned home with a fresh perspective on the evolving attitudes in Europe on East-West relations. This year, we'll bring that same tradition of independent inquiry to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Response has been heavy and space is limited to 45, so it's important that you plan ahead as far as possible. Send a deposit of $200 per person to guarantee your place on the tour. All deposits are refundable until April 23.

**No deposits will be accepted after that date.**

SEND TO:

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